Skin Tear Management Flow Chart

**Assessment**
- All clients should have a risk assessment for skin tears on admission
- Assess and document skin tears using a recognised assessment and classification system e.g. STAR
- Assess the surrounding skin for swelling, discolouration or bruising

**Prevention**
- Assess skin regularly and implement a prevention protocol for those at risk
- Use soap-free bathing products
- Apply moisturiser twice daily
- Use correct lifting and positioning techniques
- Avoid wearing rings that may snag the skin
- When repositioning use assistive devices such as slide sheets
- Protect fragile skin with either limb protectors or long sleeves or pants
- Pad or cushion equipment and furniture
- Avoid using tapes or adhesives, use tubular retention bandages to secure dressings

**Management**
- Control bleeding
- Cleanse the wound gently with warm water or normal saline, pat dry
- Realign edges if possible - do not stretch the skin - use a moist cotton-tip to roll skin into place
- Apply a low adherent, soft-silicone dressing to wound, overlapping the wound by at least 2 cm
- Draw arrows on the dressing to indicate the direction of dressing removal
- Mark the date on the dressing
- Apply limb protector

**Risk factors for a Skin Tear**
- History of previous skin tears
- Bruising, discoloured, thin or fragile skin
- Cognitive impairment / dementia
- Impaired sensory perception
- Dependency
- Multiple or high risk medications e.g. steroids, anticoagulants
- Impaired mobility
- Poor nutritional status
- Dry skin / dehydration
- Presence of friction, shearing and/or pressure

**STAR classification system**

- **Category 1a**
  - A skin tear where the edges can be realigned to the normal anatomical position (without undue stretching) and the skin or flap colour is not pale, dusky or darkened.

- **Category 1b**
  - A skin tear where the edges can be realigned to the normal anatomical position (without undue stretching) and the skin or flap colour is pale, dusky or darkened.

- **Category 2a**
  - A skin tear where the edges can not be realigned to the normal anatomical position and the skin or flap colour is not pale, dusky or darkened.

- **Category 2b**
  - A skin tear where the edges can not be realigned to the normal anatomical position and the skin or flap colour is pale, dusky or darkened.

- **Category 3**
  - A skin tear where the skin flap is completely absent.

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