

Wound Care Insider

An educational resource from Gentell

It's Time to Retire Foam Dressings in Long Term Care

Despite a long history of use in wound care, foam dressings are now considered to be outdated. **Gentell** strongly recommends that facilities and clinicians discontinue the use of foam and instead utilize superior options available through our wound care program. Here's why.

Why Super Absorbent Dressings Are Better Than Foam

1. Superior Absorption

Super absorbents manage more exudate, keeping wounds drier and promoting faster healing. Foam saturates quickly, leaving moisture on the wound bed.

2. Maceration Prevention

Super absorbents wick moisture away from the skin and lock it in, reducing the risk of maceration. Foam holds fluid against the skin, increasing the chance of skin breakdown.

3. Squeeze-Out Protection

Super absorbents retain exudate even under pressure, such as when repositioning patients. Foam dressings frequently leak or "squeeze out" fluid, putting patients and bedding at risk.

4. Long-Term Cost Savings

While foam may appear inexpensive up front, frequent dressing changes and wound complications increase overall costs. Super absorbents reduce change frequency and complications, lowering total cost of care.

Why Silicone Bordered Gauze Dressings Are Better Than Foam

1. Simpler Application and Removal

Bordered gauze is easier and quicker to apply correctly, especially in fast-paced settings. Foam can be bulky and difficult to secure, especially around joints and contoured areas.

2. Breathability and Flexibility

Bordered gauze allows for better moisture vapor exchange, reducing moisture accumulation on the skin. Foam can trap heat and moisture, contributing to skin irritation.

3. Better for Low-Exudating or Shallow Wounds

Foam dressings are overkill for many wound types, especially those with minimal drainage. Bordered gauze provides appropriate, cost-effective coverage for these wounds.

4. Less Waste, Lower Cost

Foam dressings are often wasted on wounds that don't require them, adding to materials and budget inefficiencies. Bordered gauze offers clinical effectiveness without unnecessary expense.

Bottom Line for Clinicians

Foam is no longer considered to be the gold standard for all wound care. Superior alternatives, like silicone super absorbent bordered dressings (or silicone bordered gauze) in place of silicone foam, provide better clinical outcomes with proper use, easier use and smarter spending. Making the switch away from foam is beneficial for your residents. For your team. For your budget.

*Gentell wound care products are only approved for documented open wounds. Using foam on non-qualifying or undocumented wounds violates protocol and puts facilities at risk for reimbursement issues.