
Evidence Summary: Pressure Injuries: Preventing medical device related pressure injuries

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CLINICAL QUESTION

What is the best available evidence on prophylactic dressings to prevent medical device related pressure injuries (MDRPI)?

SUMMARY

Medical device related pressure injuries occur from the use of devices designed and applied to the body for diagnostic purposes or for the delivery of treatment. The MDRPI occurs as a result of ongoing pressure on the skin from the device or from fixations used to secure the device.¹ Individuals in intensive care setting²⁻⁶ and children/neonates⁷⁻¹² are at particular risk of developing a MDRPI (Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 evidence). Interventions designed to reduce interface pressure and protect the skin, such as regularly repositioning the device (Level 5b evidence), alternating devices (Level 1c evidence), moisturising the skin (Level 1c evidence), and applying a prophylactic dressing (Levels 1, 2 and 4 evidence), are effective in reducing the risk of MDRPI.

CLINICAL PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Select a correctly fitted and sized medical device made from the least damaging materials. (Grade B)
- Conduct regular skin assessments under and around medical devices. (Grade A)
- Regularly moisturise the skin underneath a MDRPI. (Grade B)
- Reposition medical devices on a regular basis whenever possible. (Grade A)
- Apply a prophylactic dressing underneath a medical device. (Grade B)

Considerations when using prophylactic dressings underneath medical devices

Consider the following when using prophylactic dressings under a medical device:

- Continue to conduct regular skin inspections (at least twice daily).¹³ Some prophylactic dressings are designed to be easily removed and reapplied to facilitate skin inspection without causing medical adhesive related skin injury^{13, 14} (Level 5b evidence).
- Consider the effect of the chosen prophylactic dressing on skin microclimate. A cohort study with children wearing different types of prophylactic dressings under oxygen facial masks demonstrated high levels of skin hydration with hydrogel dressings ($p < 0.001$) and silicon foam dressings ($p = 0.005$) compared to no dressing¹¹ (Level 3c evidence). Ability to absorb moisture could contribute to the efficacy of a prophylactic dressing^{14, 15} (Level 5c evidence).
- There is minimal evidence on appropriate thickness of a prophylactic dressing underneath a medical device. Prophylactic dressings with multiple layers may be more effective in reducing the impact of pressure, shear and friction forces^{15, 16} (Level 5c evidence); however, excessively thick or layered prophylactic dressings may increase pressure at the skin-medical when used under a medical device¹³ (Level 5b evidence).

EVIDENCE

Skin assessment and preventive care

Regularly inspecting the skin underneath a medical device identifies areas that are being exposed to detrimental

SOURCES OF EVIDENCE				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Experimental studies	Quasi-experimental	Observational – analytic design	Observational – descriptive	Bench research Expert consensus
3 RCTs ^{10, 17, 22}	4 prospectively controlled studies ^{21, 23 - 25} 1 retrospective control group study ²⁶	4 cohort studies with control group ^{7, 9, 11, 19}	7 cross sectional studies ^{2-6, 12, 20} 3 case series ^{8, 18, 27}	1 <i>in-vivo</i> laboratory study ¹⁶ 1 <i>in-vitro</i> laboratory study ¹⁴ 1 bench research ¹⁵ 2 expert consensus ^{1, 13}

pressure or shear forces. The process of inspecting the skin also provides an opportunity to repositioning and rotate the device. Clinical guidelines recommend inspecting the skin underneath and around medical devices on a regular (at least twice daily) basis¹³ (Level 5b evidence). For individuals who are vulnerable to localised or generalised oedema, skin should be assessed more frequently.¹³ Health care professionals can educate individuals and their caregivers to perform skin inspections under medical devices,¹³ including demonstrating how to safely move a medical device for skin visualisation and providing information about skin and tissue changes that require medical attention and intervention (Level 5b evidence).

A randomised controlled trial (RCT) conducted in an ICU demonstrated efficacy of a hyper-oxygenated fatty acid moisturising regimen used under plastic facial masks. Skin assessments were conducted every four to six hours and moisturiser was reapplied according to skin hydration status. The moisturising intervention was associated with lower rates of MDRPI than no intervention ($p=0.05$), a thin prophylactic dressing ($p=0.03$) or a foam dressing ($p<0.001$)¹⁷ (Level 1c evidence).

Selecting, applying and positioning medical devices to prevent MDRPI

Medical device related injuries increase when devices are incorrectly sized or fitted. If the device does not fit correctly, there can be higher interface pressure (pressure between the device and the skin) and/or increased shear^{1, 13} (Level 5b evidence). Correctly sizing or adapting the medical device and its securing tapes is shown to decrease MDRPI in children ($n=68$) wearing halo vests.¹⁸ (Level 4c evidence) In a study conducted in healthy volunteers, securing a ventilation masks using straps with tighter tension was associated with higher interface pressure on the bridge of the nose¹⁹ (Level 3c evidence).

Selecting devices that are made of softer and more flexible materials, particularly at the point the device that interfaces with the skin, could reduce the risk of a MDRPI. Reduction in the rates of MDRI was seen in a trauma centre when ET tubes of less rigid material were introduced to the facility²⁰ (Level 4.b evidence). When a cloth nasal mask was used instead of a plastic facial mask with a prophylactic dressing, lower rates of facial PIs were observed in children receiving oxygen therapy (Level 3c evidence). If there is an option, rotating the type of medical device used can reduce risk of MDRPI. A study in neonates demonstrated lower rates of

nasal PIs when oxygen delivery system was rotated between nasal prongs and masks compared to using only one type of oxygen delivery device¹⁰ (Level 1c evidence).

The type of tape used to secure devices may also reduce the risk of PUs. In one non-randomised, non-blinded study, a commercial holder for nasogastric tubes (NGTs) was associated with fewer nasal PIs than a particular method of using regular adhesive tape to secure the NGT²¹ (Level 2c evidence).

Because MDRPI occur due to prolonged pressure on the skin, relieving pressure by repositioning or rotating the device regularly is likely to decrease the risk of MDRPIs. In a RCT conducted with neonates, alternating between nasal prongs and a facial mask for delivering oxygen therapy resulted in fewer Stage 1 MDRPIs than using either nasal prongs or a facial mask continuously ($p<0.001$)¹⁰ (Level 1c evidence).

Prophylactic dressings to prevent MDRPI

A number of studies (details below) support the use of a prophylactic dressing underneath nasal prongs,²² oxygen face masks,²³ endotracheal/tracheostomy (ET) tube ties,^{24, 25} casts applied over a bony prominence,²⁶ and nasotracheal tubes.²⁷The available evidence provides support for a range of different prophylactic dressings compared to no dressing, but there is no evidence to indicate if a particular prophylactic dressing is more effective for reducing MDRPI than other dressing types.

Two studies have demonstrated efficacy of silicone pressure-reducing strips underneath ET tube twill ties in individuals with facial burns²⁵ and under nasal prongs used for delivering oxygen therapy for preterm infants. In both studies, the silicone strips were associated with significant reduction in MDRPIs compared to no prophylactic dressing^{22, 25} (Level 1.c and level 2d evidence). Odds of a MDRPI was 3.43 times higher for preterm infants ($p<0.05$) using nasal prongs without a prophylactic dressing²² (Level 1c evidence).

A soft silicone foam dressing was associated with a significant reduction in the risk of tracheostomy site MDRPI in children compared to no prophylactic dressing (0% versus 11.8%, $p=0.02$)²⁴(Level 2d evidence).

A polyurethane foam pad was effective underneath leg/foot casts in reducing MDPRI compared to no intervention. The relative risk of developing a heel pressure ulcer when a prophylactic polyurethane foam dressing was applied was 0.08 (95% CI 0.02 to 0.33)²⁶ (Level 2d evidence).

A hydrocolloid dressing applied to the nasal bridge when a facial mask was applied for non-invasive ventilation was associated with an absolute risk reduction of MDRPI of more than 50%.²³ (Level 2c evidence).

A case series demonstrated reduction in nasal PIs associated with using a foam packing dressing in the nostril to protect the skin from pressure from nasotracheal tube for individuals having maxillofacial surgery²⁷ (Level 4c evidence).

METHODOLOGY

This evidence summary is based on a structured database search combining search terms that describe heel PIs with search terms related to prophylactic dressings. Searches were conducted in EMBASE, Pubmed, Medline, Scopus and the Cochrane Library. Evidence published up to June 2017 in English was considered for inclusion. Retrieved studies were appraised for relevance and rigour using Joanna Briggs Institute appraisal tools.²⁸

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