SKIN CARE IN VLBW BABIES

Principles
- Maintain integrity of skin
- Prevent risk of skin injury
- Management of skin injury

MAINTAIN INTEGRITY OF SKIN

Initial & ongoing skin assessment
- Color of skin
- Rash, breakdown, pressure sores
- Monitor probe, IV sites
No bath
Avoid emollients and creams. If used it should be non-perfumed, nonirritating, and hydrophilic e.g. aquaphor

Provide appropriate bedding and support using soft bedding.
Turn and position the infant
Sick infants with intact skin: Turn 3-4 hourly
Infants with skin breakdown: Turn 2 hourly

PREVENT RISK OF SKIN INJURY

Avoid spilling betadine as it can burn the skin

Skin preparation
First apply spirit, let it dry then apply betadine.
Wait for a minute then wipe it off with spirit
After the procedure, remove completely with sterile water.
Take care not to spill and collect at back of baby.

Tape
Apply tape in minimal possible area of skin.
Once tape is applied, remove it only after 24 hr.
Do not bandage after venepuncture for hemostasis.
Spray healex on skin before tape application.
Avoid bonding agents such as tincture benzoin.

Care givers should hand wash properly:
Simple, Cost effective
- Use a mild soap/solution not containing any anti-microbial agent.
- For two minutes before entering and for 30 seconds before and after touching the baby
- Surgical scrubbing: Not recommended

While fixing ET tube, apply tegaderm on the skin before putting dynaplast
It will prevent avulsion of skin while removing tape

MANAGEMENT OF SKIN INJURY

Optimize wound healing
- Maintain physiological stability
- Maintain thermal neutral environment
- Ensure adequate nutritional intake
Keep wet skin lesion dry and dry skin lesion wet

Skin excoriation
- Determine the cause
- Wash area with warm water
- If lesions are open: apply bacitracin ointment or with a petroleum gauze

Intertrigo
- Clean area with warm water
- Dry the skin
- Promote aeration in the area using neck rolls, soft gauze etc.

Diaper dermatitis
- Use cotton diapers, change frequently
- Clean perineal area with warm water and let it dry to air. Baby wipes containing alcohol and perfumes not recommended
- Apply protective ointments containing zinc oxide (40%) liberally to affected area
- Nystatin cream to be applied if fungal infection suspected
- Do not put baby powder

CONCLUSION
Simple neonatal care practices will help maintaining a healthy and intact skin in VLBW babies