

SKIN ALLERGY TO SILVER DRESSING POST TOTAL KNEE REPLACEMENT MIMICKING SURGICAL SITE INFECTION

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Introduction: Silver impregnated wound care product is a useful adjunct by harnessing its ionic silver foam that has antimicrobial activity. This product is well tolerated by most patients however, we present a case of allergic contact dermatitis secondary to this product that mimicked surgical site infection after a total knee replacement.

Discussion: 51 years old lady complained of knee pain two weeks after a total knee replacement. She denied fever and she was able to move her knee from 0-100 degrees flexion prior to presentation, her post operative total knee replacement wound was clean and dressed with Aquacel Ag Surgical (The dressing was removed on presentation two weeks after the operation. Her wound was erythematous but no exudate Her CRP was 0.73 mg/dL, ESR was 23 mm/hour and WBC was 11. Wound was cleaned with chlorhexidine gluconate on daily basis and she was started empirically on intravenous ampicillin sulbactam for five days. She was discharged upon follow up later, no obvious sign of surgical site infection to this date. The allergic form of contact dermatitis occurs after an initial sensitizing exposure is associated with re exposure of the responsible allergen. Clinically, wound associated contact dermatitis presents with bright red erythema, localized itching, pain, with discrete or diffuse dermatitis of varying severity that may delay healing or worsen the wound base and margin

Conclusion: History of metal allergy should be sought prior to the usage of any metal containing wound care product. A routine use of patch test using silver can be done first 2 days to identify patients who are allergic to these form of dressing before using it as permanent dressing