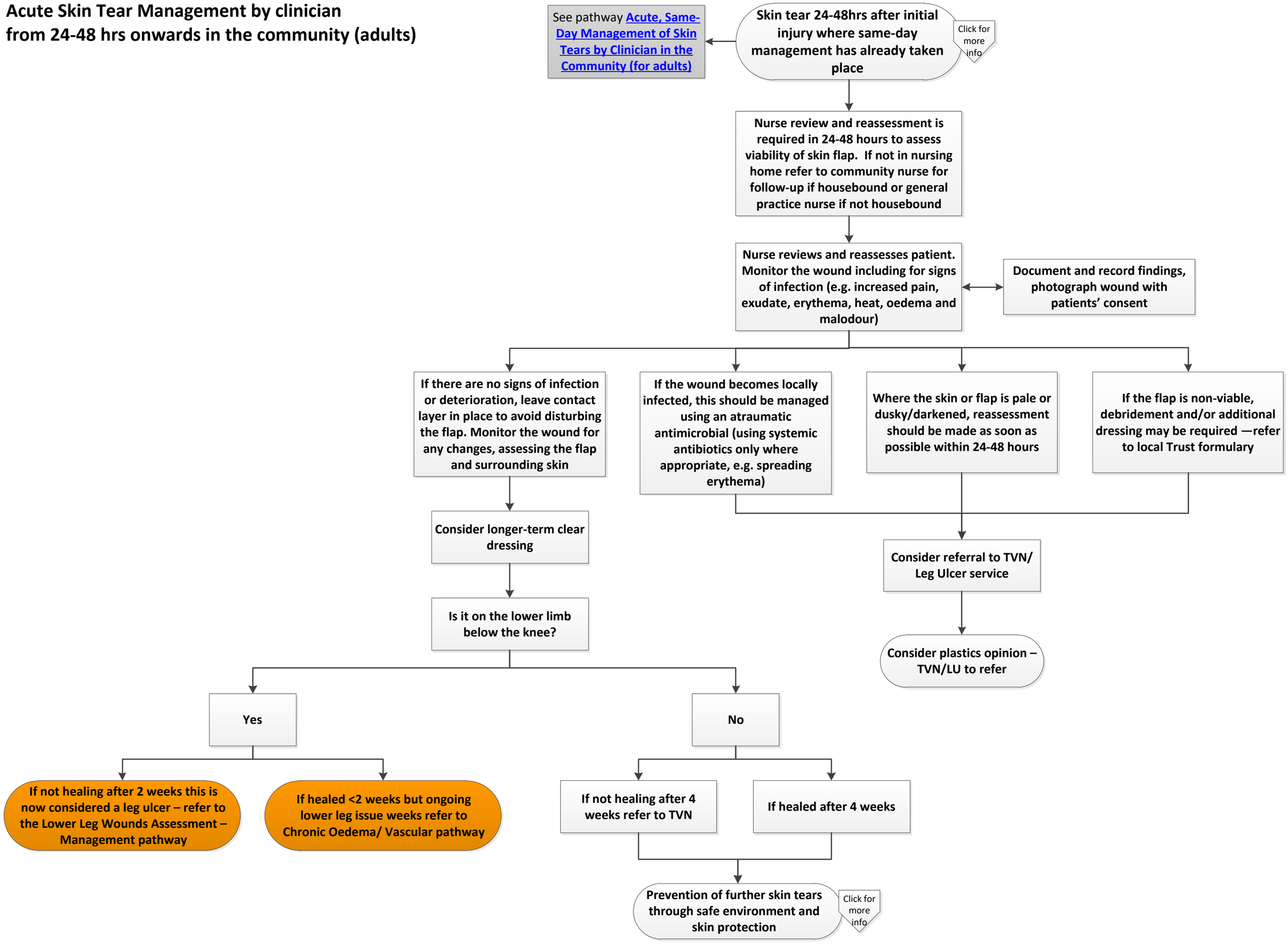
Acute Skin Tear Management by clinician from 24-48 hrs onwards in the community (adults)



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Skin tear 24-48hrs after initial injury where same-day management has already taken place

Set treatment goals

- Avoid further trauma
- Protect peri-wound skin (e.g. use skin barrier)
- Manage exudate for optimal moist wound healing
- Prevent infection
- Minimise pain
- Implement prevention protocol – see Prevention of Skin Tears by Clinicians pathway

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Prevention of further skin tears through safe environment and skin protection

How to create a safe environment

- Ensure adequate lighting and ease of reaching the light switches
- Remove rugs and excessive furniture
- Ensure any small furniture (night table, chairs) in the immediate surroundings are positioned carefully to avoid unnecessary bumps or knocks to the patient. Upholster sharp borders of furniture or bed surroundings with padding and soft material
- Use appropriate aids when transferring patients and employ good manual handling techniques according to local manual handling guidance e.g. lifting device, slide sheets. Bed sheets should NEVER be used to move the patient as this can contribute to damage by causing a dragging effect on the skin (Beldon, 2006).
- Where possible reduce or eliminate pressure, shear and friction using pressure relieving devices and positioning techniques
- Encourage the wearing of appropriate footwear and clothing to reduce the risk of injury.
- Long Socks may be worn to protect the pre tibial area
- Ensure that adhesive dressings are avoided where there is a risk of a skin tear.
- Ensure that adhesive dressings are removed slowly to avoid the risk of skin tears.

Skin protection

Ongoing prevention after a skin tear has healed.

An essential aspect of skin protection is keeping the skin well hydrated by maintaining nutritional intake and fluid balance. Cleansing moisturising and protection of the skin is vital in maintaining skin integrity. Patients with dry skin on their arms and legs will benefit from the application of an appropriate pH friendly moisturising cream twice a day (Hanson et al 2005).

It is important to:

- Avoid the use of drying soaps. Use pH friendly soap and cleansing solutions
- Apply creams or lotions to maintain the suppleness of the skin
- Reduce moisture from incontinence or other sources
- Place, fix and remove peripheral access devices carefully using a silicone based tape
- Caution should be taken when applying an adhesive tape directly on to the skin
- Protect fragile skin by covering with tubular or roller bandages, long sleeved clothing etc.

Reference: Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust