

NEGATIVE PRESSURE WOUND DRESSING

BACKGROUND

[0001] The subject matter disclosed herein relates generally to negative pressure dressings and to negative pressure tissue treatment devices having negative pressure dressings and, more particularly, to dressings that can be used with a source of negative pressure to deliver negative pressure therapy. Such dressings are suitable for the treatment of a variety of wounds including chronic and acute types, including infected wounds, venous ulcers, diabetic ulcers, burns, surgical wounds and the like.

[0002] Clinical studies and practice have shown that providing a negative pressure in proximity to a tissue site augments and accelerates the growth of new tissue at the tissue site. The applications of this phenomenon are numerous, but one particular application of negative pressure involves treating wounds. This treatment (frequently referred to in the medical community as “negative pressure wound therapy,” “reduced pressure therapy,” or “vacuum therapy”) provides numerous benefits, including drawing out fluid from the wound, migration of epithelial and subcutaneous tissues, improved blood flow, and micro-deformation of tissue at the wound site. These benefits result in increased development of granulation tissue and faster healing times, while also helping to reduce the level of scar formation. Typically, negative pressure is applied by a reduced pressure source to tissue through a porous pad or other manifold device that is sealed to a patient’s skin around the periphery of a wound or other tissue for which such treatment is prescribed. The porous pad includes cells or pores that are capable of distributing reduced pressure to the tissue and channeling fluids that are drawn from the tissue. The porous pad often is incorporated into a dressing having other components that facilitate treatment.

[0003] In the administration of negative pressure wound therapy, the negative pressure may be applied continuously or intermittently, depending on the type of wound or other tissue being treated and the clinical objectives. The dressing can be changed periodically, such as, for example, one, two, or three times per week (or as needed). The terms “reduced pressure” and “negative pressure” refer to a pressure that is below normal atmospheric pressure.

[0004] To enable a prolonged application of topical negative pressure, powered systems, which include a vacuum generation source such as a pump, have been developed. Many of these systems, however, are not convenient for users as they can be large, heavy, noisy, uncomfortable, and not

simple for users to apply and operate correctly. Such systems also rely on an outside power or vacuum source to create the prescribed negative pressure conditions.

[0005] Negative pressure wound and tissue treatments and other advanced technical interventions are becoming more prevalent given the occurrence of both the aging population, as well as the increasingly compromised patient populations. This trend looks set to continue. In wound care, healthcare professionals are now more likely to encounter wounds that are difficult to manage with a multitude of complex healing problems.

[0006] While several approaches have been used in the application of negative pressure therapy for the management of wounds, these suffer from multiple issues. For example, one problem with negative pressure wound dressings in the prior art is that they often experience leaks around the dressing periphery. Relatedly, negative pressure wound dressings that experience leaks require more powerful pumps, which in turn require substantially greater inputs of energy, typically electrical energy, to maintain an acceptable amount of pressure reduction at the wound site. Another problem with such dressings relate to the dressing's inability to absorb and retain acceptable quantities of drainage and exudate from the wound site to promote an adequate environment for healing. Moreover, many prior art negative pressure wound dressings are provided as a set of multiple parts or components that require assembly via multiple application steps at the time the dressing is being applied over the wound, which often results in improper applications of the dressing and/or inoperability of the device. All of these problems detract from the effectiveness of the prescribed negative pressure wound therapy, resulting in a suboptimal wound healing environment.

[0007] There remains a need for negative pressure wound dressings that are simple to apply to a wound site, that are provided in the form of a unitary dressing construct and that provide improved sealing for maintenance of acceptable negative pressure at the wound site with decreased power requirements. The present disclosure addresses these needs and provides other benefits and advantages.

SUMMARY

[0008] The present disclosure provides negative pressure wound dressings, and devices that include negative pressure wound dressings. In one aspect of the disclosure, there is provided a unitary negative pressure wound dressing construct that includes: (i) an absorbent layer having a first surface for contacting a wound and a second surface opposite the first surface, the absorbent layer comprising a gelling absorbent material and having a perimeter border, (ii) a cover layer having a first surface facing the absorbent layer and a second surface opposite the first surface, wherein the cover layer has a perimeter border having dimensions greater than the dimensions of the absorbent layer perimeter such that the perimeter border of the cover layer extends beyond the perimeter border of the absorbent layer, and (iii) a peripheral adhesive skin contact layer attached to the first surface of the absorbent layer adjacent the perimeter border of the absorbent layer, wherein the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer defines a window through which the absorbent layer is able to contact the wound, and wherein the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer comprises a hydrocolloid adhesive. In some embodiments, the dimensions of the perimeter border of the absorbent layer are greater than dimensions of a wound to be covered by the dressing. In some embodiments, wherein the cover layer is water impermeable. In some embodiments, the cover layer is water impermeable and air and vapour permeable. In some embodiments, the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer has a perimeter border having dimensions greater than the dimensions of the absorbent layer perimeter such that the perimeter border of the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer extends beyond the perimeter border of the absorbent layer. In some embodiments, the perimeter border of the cover layer and the perimeter border of the peripheral skin contact layer are bonded together to form a seal. In some embodiments, the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer is operable to adhere to skin surrounding a wound. In some embodiments, the cover layer defines an aperture configured for connection to a source of negative pressure.

[0009] In some embodiments, the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer and the cover layer are operable to form an air-tight seal between the absorbent layer and an external environment of the dressing when the dressing is applied over a wound and a source of negative pressure is sealingly connected to the aperture. In some embodiments, the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer has a thickness of from about 0.1 mm to about 5 mm. In some embodiments, the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer has a width of from about 2 cm to about 6 cm.

[0010] In some embodiments, the dressing further includes a first bonding layer positioned between the absorbent layer and the cover layer. In some embodiments, the first bonding layer comprises a layer of hydrocolloid adhesive. In some embodiments, the first bonding layer has a thickness of from about 0.2 mm to about 2 mm.

[0011] In some embodiments, the dressing further includes a structural layer corresponding to the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer and having a first surface bonded to the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer, and a second bonding layer corresponding to the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer and positioned in contact with a second surface of the structural layer that is opposite the first surface of the structural layer. In some embodiments, the structural layer is positioned between, and sealingly bonded to, the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer and the second bonding layer. In some embodiments, the second bonding layer is sealingly bonded to a continuous portion of the first surface of the absorbent layer that is adjacent the full perimeter border of the absorbent layer. In some embodiments, the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer, the second bonding layer and the cover layer are operable to form an air-tight seal between the absorbent layer and an external environment of the dressing when the dressing is applied over a wound and a source of negative pressure is sealingly connected to the aperture. In some embodiments, the structural layer comprises a polyurethane film. In some embodiments, the second bonding layer has a thickness of from about 0.2 mm to about 2 mm.

[0012] In some embodiments, the dressing further includes a first bonding layer positioned between the absorbent layer and the cover layer, a structural layer corresponding to the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer and having a first surface bonded to the adhesive skin contact layer, and a second bonding layer corresponding to the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer and positioned in contact with a second surface of the structural layer that is opposite the first surface of the structural layer. In some embodiments, the structural layer is positioned between, and sealingly bonded to, the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer and the second bonding layer. In some embodiments, the second bonding layer is sealingly bonded to a continuous portion of the first surface of the absorbent layer that is adjacent the full perimeter border of the absorbent layer.

[0013] In some embodiments, the gelling absorbent material comprises a gel-forming fiber or filament. In some embodiments, the gel-forming fiber or filament comprising chemically-modified cellulose, alginate, carboxymethyl cellulose, or combinations thereof. In some embodiments, the absorbent layer comprises stitches. In some embodiments, the absorbent layer further comprises an

antimicrobial agent. In some embodiments, the cover layer comprises a member selected from the group consisting of a polyurethane (PU), a polyvinyl chloride (PVC), a silicone elastomer, a fluoropolymer, and combinations thereof.

[0014] In some embodiments, the dressing further includes a source of negative pressure sealingly connected to the aperture and in fluid communication with the absorbent layer. In some embodiments, the source of negative pressure comprises a pump connected to the aperture. In some embodiments, the pump is connected to the aperture with a conduit. In some embodiments, the dressing further includes a connector attached to the cover layer over the aperture and configured for connection to a conduit to communicate negative pressure from the conduit to the wound through the aperture. In some embodiments, the connector comprises polyurethane or polyvinylchloride. In some embodiments, the connector comprises a change indicator.

[0015] In some embodiments, the dressing further includes a negative pressure distribution layer positioned between the absorbent layer and the cover layer. In some embodiments, the negative pressure distribution layer comprises an open cell foam layer. In some embodiments, the open cell foam layer is hydrophobic.

[0016] In another aspect of the disclosure, there is provided a disposable negative pressure wound therapy device that includes a disposable pump for generating negative pressure, and a dressing according to any of the embodiments disclosed herein for covering and protecting a wound, wherein the cover layer defines an aperture connected to the pump. In some embodiments, the disposable pump is a battery operated pump. In some embodiments, the device further includes a conduit defining a lumen that provides fluid communication between the pump and the aperture defined in the cover layer of the dressing, whereby operation of the pump creates negative pressure at the site of a wound when the dressing is affixed over the wound by pressure sealing the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer to skin surrounding the wound.

[0017] Further features, characteristics and embodiments of the present disclosure will be apparent from the detailed description herein.

INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

[0018] All publications, patents, and patent applications mentioned in this specification are herein incorporated by reference to the same extent as if each individual publication, patent, or patent application was specifically and individually indicated to be incorporated by reference.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

- [0019] **Fig. 1** illustrates a schematic top view one dressing embodiment according to the disclosure.
- [0020] **Fig. 2** illustrates a cross-sectional side view of the dressing embodiment shown in **Fig. 1**.
- [0021] **Fig. 3** illustrates another cross-sectional side view of the dressing embodiment shown in **Fig. 1**.
- [0022] **Fig. 4** illustrates a schematic top view another dressing embodiment according to the disclosure.
- [0023] **Fig. 5** illustrates a cross-sectional side view of the dressing embodiment shown in **Fig. 4**.
- [0024] **Fig. 6** illustrates another cross-sectional side view of the dressing embodiment shown in **Fig. 4**.
- [0025] **Fig. 7** illustrates a cross-sectional side view of another dressing embodiment according to the disclosure.
- [0026] **Fig. 8** illustrates another cross-sectional side view of the dressing embodiment shown in **Fig. 7**.
- [0027] It should be understood that the drawings are not necessarily to scale and that the disclosed embodiments are sometimes illustrated diagrammatically and in partial views. In certain instances, details which are not necessary for an understanding of the disclosed methods and devices or which render other details difficult to perceive may have been omitted. It should be further understood that this disclosure is not limited to the particular embodiments illustrated herein.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0028] For the purposes of promoting an understanding of the principles of the invention, reference will now be made to the embodiments described herein and illustrated in the Figures and specific language will be used to describe the same. The embodiments of the present application described below are not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the teachings of the present application to the precise forms disclosed in the following detailed description. Rather, the embodiments are chosen and described so that others skilled in the art may appreciate and understand the principles and practices of the present application. It will therefore be understood that no limitation of the scope of the invention is intended by the description of specific embodiments. Any alterations and further modifications in the described embodiments, and any further applications of the principles of the invention as described herein are contemplated as would normally occur to one skilled in the art to which the invention relates.

[0029] Problems and challenges associated with negative pressure wound dressings in the prior art, such as poor seals, complex on-site assembly and the like are addressed by the present disclosure, which provides new negative pressure wound dressing constructs that feature unitary construction with strong seals and excellent fluid absorption characteristics.

[0030] One aspect of the disclosure is a dressing that includes an absorbent layer comprising a gelling absorbent material, a cover layer composed of a water impermeable and air and vapour permeable material overlying the absorbent layer, and a peripheral adhesive skin contact layer situated beneath the peripheral border of the absorbent layer to sealingly affix the dressing to a patient's skin. As used in the above sentence, the term "beneath" means "on the opposite side from the skin cover layer." The peripheral adhesive skin contact layer comprises a hydrocolloid adhesive. The cover layer defines an aperture configured for connection to a source of negative pressure.

[0031] The dressings disclosed herein are particularly suitable for use in vacuum and/or negative pressure wound therapy, but can alternatively be used in other contexts as well, including but not limited to use in other exudate or fluid producing instances.

[0032] Vacuum wound therapy can be used for the treatment of a multitude of wound types, including but not limited to, acute wounds (such as, following fasciotomy or other surgeries), chronic wounds (such as pressure ulcers, trophic and vascular ulcers), and the management of complex soft tissue injuries (such as, open abdomen (laparotomy)).

Certain Terminologies

[0033] Unless defined otherwise, all technical and scientific terms used herein have the same meaning as is commonly understood by one of skill in the art to which the subject matter of this disclosure belongs. Moreover, it should be understood that when certain values and ranges are recited herein in connection with various embodiments of the present teachings, all values and ranges which fall between such listed values and ranges are intended to be encompassed by the present teaching unless explicitly stated otherwise. Finally, although specific methods and materials are described herein with respect to certain representative aspects of the present disclosure, it should be understood and appreciated that other methods and materials similar or equivalent to those described herein can be used in the practice or testing of the present application without straying from the intended scope of this disclosure.

[0034] It is to be understood that the following general description and the following examples are explanatory only and are not restrictive of any subject matter claimed. It is also to be understood that, while the use of words such as preferable, preferably, preferred or more preferred utilized in the description above indicate that the feature so described may be more desirable, it nonetheless may not be necessary and embodiments lacking the same may be contemplated as within the scope of the invention, the scope being defined by the claims that follow. In this application, the use of the singular includes the plural unless specifically stated otherwise. It must be noted that, as used in the specification and the appended claims, the singular forms “a,” “an” and “the” include plural referents unless the context clearly dictates otherwise. In this application, the use of “or” means “and/or” unless stated otherwise. Furthermore, use of the terms “comprising,” “including” and “having,” as well as other forms, such as “comprise,” “comprises,” “comprised,” “include,” “includes,” “included,” “have” and “has” are inclusive and not limiting, and therefore specify the presence of stated features, integers, steps, operations, elements, and/or components, but do not preclude the presence or addition of one or more other features, integers, steps, operations, elements, components, and/or groups thereof. The method actions, processes, and operations described herein are not to be construed as necessarily requiring their performance in the particular order discussed or illustrated, unless specifically identified as an order of performance. It is also to be understood that additional or alternative actions or operations may be employed.

[0035] Although the terms first, second, third, etc. may be used herein to describe various elements, components, regions, layers and/or sections, these elements, components, regions, layers and/or sections should not be limited by these terms. These terms may be only used to distinguish one element, component, region, layer or section from another region, layer or section. Terms such as “first,” “second,” and other numerical terms when used herein do not imply a sequence or order unless clearly indicated by the context. Thus, a first element, component, region, layer or section discussed herein could be termed a second element, component, region, layer or section without departing from the teachings of the example embodiments.

[0036] As used herein, ranges and amounts can be expressed as “about” a particular value or range. About also includes the exact amount. For example, “about 5 μ L” means “about 5 μ L” and also “5 μ L.” Generally, the term “about” includes an amount that would be expected to be within experimental error. The term “about” includes values that are within 10% less to 10% greater of the value provided. For example, “about 50%” means “between 45% and 55%.” Also, by way of example, “about 30” means “between 27 and 33.”

[0037] The section headings used herein are for organizational purposes only and are not to be construed as limiting the subject matter described.

[0038] As used herein, the terms “individual(s)”, “subject(s)” and “patient(s)” mean any mammal. In some embodiments, the mammal is a human. In some embodiments, the mammal is a non-human.

[0039] The term “exudate” refers to any fluids produced by a wound that may be secreted from the wound.

[0040] The term “periwound” refers to the area directly bordering the wound area itself. The term “periskin” refers to the skin area directly bordering the wound area itself.

[0041] The terms “negative pressure” and “reduced pressure” as used herein generally refer to a pressure less than the ambient pressure at a tissue site that is being subjected to treatment. In most cases, this reduced pressure will be less than the atmospheric pressure at which the patient is located. Alternatively, the reduced pressure may be less than a hydrostatic pressure associated with tissue at the tissue site. Although the terms “vacuum” and “negative pressure” may be used to describe the pressure applied to the tissue site, the actual pressure reduction applied to the tissue site may be significantly less than the pressure reduction normally associated with a complete vacuum.

[0042] As used herein, the term “moldable” refers to an elastic, deformable property and ability to conform and/or form a seal. The moldable materials of various embodiments disclosed herein may be differentiated from stretchable and flexible materials. The term, “moldable” can encompass the properties of malleability and ductility. The absolute shape change of a moldable material may be controlled by an external resistive element resulting in conformance to a complimentary feature.

[0043] As used herein, the term “flexible” refers to the elastic deformation of a structure under an external force. Upon removal of the external force the structure will substantially return to its original (previous) geometry. Measurement of flexibility can be quantified in linear displacement (μm , mm, cm, m), *e.g.*, original length/diameter and flexed length/diameter. The second moment of area influences the deformation experienced by the body. A device which is moldable can also have the property of flexibility. Flexibility is desirable in dressings. Skin flexes during the movement and activities of daily living, especially in areas over joint tissues. Rigid systems would not be able continually adapt to the skin flexibility. However, flexible devices are capable of continually adapting to the skin and mucosal membranes flexibility.

[0044] The general term “adhesive,” as used herein, refers to layers, fabrics, strips, laminates, barriers and materials that are used to promote adherence of a dressing to the skin and/or promote a seal between layers of the dressing to one another, thereby preventing undesirable leakage of effluent and providing an effective environment for application of negative pressure.

A Dressing

[0045] Several representative embodiments of dressings suitable for use in connection with negative pressure wound therapy are described herein. First with reference to **Figs. 1-3**, dressing **100** includes absorbent layer **110**, cover layer **120** and peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **130**. While the dressings disclosed herein can have a wide variety of shapes and sizes, for the sake of convenient description, dressing **100** depicted in **Figs. 1-3** has a generally rectangular shape with a length dimension **L** and a width dimension **W**. Absorbent layer **110** has first surface **112** for contacting a wound and second surface **114** opposite first surface **112**, and has perimeter border **116** preferably having dimensions greater than the dimensions of a wound to be covered by dressing **100**. Cover layer **120** has first surface **122** facing absorbent layer **110** and has second surface **124** opposite first surface **122**, and has perimeter border **126** that extends beyond perimeter border **116** of absorbent layer **110**. As such, perimeter border **126** has dimensions greater than dimensions of

perimeter border **116** of absorbent layer **110**. Peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **130** is attached to first surface **112** of absorbent layer **110** adjacent its perimeter border **116**. Peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **130** has an inner edge **132** that defines a window **134** through which first surface **112** of absorbent layer **110** is able to contact a wound over which dressing **100** is applied.

[0046] In some embodiments, first surface **122** of cover layer **120** is bonded to first surface **114** of absorbent layer by an adhesive. In other embodiments, at least a portion of cover layer **120** adjacent its perimeter **126** is bonded to a portion of absorbent layer **110** adjacent its perimeter **116**. In some embodiments, first surface **122** of cover layer **120** is bonded to first surface **114** of absorbent layer by positioning a bonding layer between absorbent layer **110** and cover layer **120**. In some embodiments the bonding layer comprises an adhesive. In some embodiments, the bonding layer comprises a layer of hydrocolloid adhesive.

[0047] Dressing **100** is configured to be held in place over a wound by peripheral skin contact layer **130**, which extends around the border of the dressing and defines a window therethrough. Peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **130** is composed of a material that is capable of durably and strongly adhering to skin to form a seal. The durability of the dressing's adherence to a patient's skin is an important factor in the prevention of an unacceptable level of leakage during application of negative pressure wound therapy. A person of ordinary skill understands that such durability is directly proportional to the properties of the composition used to make the peripheral skin contact layer **130**, which impacts the strength of adherence between the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer and underlying skin, and also is directly proportional to the width W^1 of peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **130**. In one embodiment, peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **130** has a width of from about 1 cm to about 10 cm. In another embodiment, peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **130** has a width of from about 2 cm to about 6 cm. In still another embodiment, peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **130** has a width of from about 2 cm to about 5 cm.

[0048] Peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **130** and cover layer **120** are operable to form an air-tight seal between the absorbent layer and an external environment of dressing **100** when dressing **100** is applied over a wound and a source of negative pressure is sealingly connected to aperture **128**.

[0049] When dressing **100** (or any other dressing disclosed herein) is manufactured, a removable film, referred to herein as a "removable backing" (not shown) may be adhered to an outer surface (also referred to as "bottom surface") of peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **130**,

which removable backing is to be removed before use of dressing **100**. With reference to **Figs. 1-3**, in one embodiment the removable backing may be adhered to the outer surface of peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **130** opposite the side of peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **130** that faces toward cover layer **126**. The removable backing, which may include multiple sections and may include folded grip sections, is removable from peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **130** before use of dressing **100**. Thus, in a preferred embodiment the removable backing protects peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **130** when the removable backing is adhered to peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **130**, but when the removable backing is removed from peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **130** for use of dressing **100** the outer surface of peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **130** is exposed and able to releasably secure dressing **100** to the skin of a user to provide a deformable pressure seal around the wound. The removable backing in some embodiments is also sized to cover the entire bottom surface of dressing **100**, including the bottom surface of peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **130** and also any exposed portion of any other layer, such as, for example, the portion of absorbent layer **110** that is exposed through window **134**.

Absorbent Layer

[0050] Absorbent layer **110** is composed of a gelling absorbent material. The gelling absorbent material preferably is capable of absorbing exudate from a wound and allowing passage of fluid through it. Absorbent layer **110** may have an open weave structure with pockets available for fluid absorption. In other embodiments, the absorbent layer may be nonwoven, knitted or formed of a tight weave. In some embodiments, the absorbent layer is a nonwoven. The absorbent layer can expand upon absorption of exudate or other fluid produced from the wound site.

[0051] In some embodiments, the absorbent layer comprises a gel-forming fiber, filament, or agent. In some embodiments, the gel-forming fiber or filament is chemically-modified cellulose, alginate, or carboxymethyl cellulose, or a combination thereof. In some embodiments, the gel-forming fiber is carboxymethyl cellulose. The absorbent layer also can include other absorbent materials such as, for example, polyacrylate, polyacrylate fibers, bi-component superabsorbent fibers, air laid nonwovens, needlefelt nonwovens, thermobonded nonwovens and foams.

[0052] Some formulations of the absorbent layer contain an alginate to increase absorption capabilities. The active surface of the absorbent layer can be coated with a cross-linked adhesive mass containing a dispersion of gelatin, pectin and/or carboxymethyl cellulose together with other

polymers. In contact with traditional dressings, the polysaccharides and other polymers absorb water and swell, forming a gel. The moist conditions produced under the dressing are intended to promote fibrinolysis, angiogenesis and wound healing, without causing softening and breaking down of tissue.

[0053] Absorbent layer **110** preferably comprises gel forming fibres. By gel forming is meant hygroscopic fibres which upon the uptake of wound exudate become moist slippery or gelatinous and thus reduce the tendency for the surrounding fibres to adhere to the wound. The gel forming fibres can be of the type which retain their structural integrity on absorption of exudate or can be of the type which lose their fibrous form and become a structureless gel. The gel forming fibres are preferably spun sodium carboxymethylcellulose fibres, chemically modified cellulosic fibres, pectin fibres, alginate fibres, chitosan fibres, hyaluronic acid fibres, or other polysaccharide fibres or fibres derived from gums. The gel forming fibres are preferably sodium carboxymethylcellulose fibres, chemically modified cellulosic fibres, alkyl sulphonate modified cellulosic fibres such as those described in WO2012/061225, pectin fibres, alginate fibres, chitosan fibres, hyaluronic acid fibres, or other polysaccharide fibres or fibres derived from gums. The gel forming fibres are preferably chemically modified cellulosic fibres in the form of a fabric and in particular carboxymethylated cellulose fibres as described in PCT WO00/01425 to Azko Nobel UK Ltd. The cellulosic fibres preferably have a degree of substitution of at least 0.05 carboxymethyl groups per glucose unit. In another embodiment, the cellulosic fibres have a degree of substitution of from about 0.12 to about 0.35 as measured by IR spectroscopy (as defined in WO 00/01425). In another embodiment, the cellulosic fibres have a degree of substitution of from about 0.20 to about 0.30 and are made by carboxymethylating a woven, knitted, or non-woven cellulosic fabric such that the absorbency is increased. The gel forming fibres preferably have an absorbency of at least 2 grams 0.9% saline solution per gram of fibre (as measured by the free swell method).

[0054] Preferably the gel forming fibres have an absorbency of at least 10 g/g as measured in the free swell absorbency method, more preferably, between 15 g/g and 25 g/g.

[0055] The gelling absorbent material can be made in accordance with the disclosure of WO 93/12275, which describes the production of various absorbent carboxymethylated cellulosic products that are capable of absorbing many times their own weight of water. This causes the carboxymethylated fibres to form a gel. WO 94/16746 and WO 00/01425 describe the use of

carboxymethylated Lyocell materials in wound dressings where the advantages of gel formation in preventing adherence and therefore reducing wound damage and pain on removal are described.

[0056] Carboxymethylation can be achieved, for example, by sequential or simultaneous treatment of the cellulosic material with a strong alkali, such as aqueous sodium hydroxide, and monochloroacetic acid or a salt thereof. The appropriate reaction conditions will depend upon the composition of the fabric and the degree of carboxymethylation required and will be readily apparent to the person skilled in the art. They may be identical or similar to those described in WO 93/12275, WO 94/16746 or WO 00/01425. Desirably the carboxymethylation is carried out in the presence of industrial methylated spirits (IMS), and IMS is preferably also used in a subsequent washing step, suitably along with water, as a cleaner and steriliser. The degree of carboxymethylation is desirably such that upon absorption of exudate the fibres at the skin-contacting surface of the bandage form a gel.

[0057] In some embodiments, absorbent layer **110** comprises carboxymethylated cellulose fibres formed into a fabric. In other embodiments, absorbent layer **110** comprises two or more layers of fabric comprising carboxymethylated cellulose fibres. In one embodiment, absorbent layer **110** comprises from about two to about ten layers of fabric comprising carboxymethylated cellulose fibres. In another embodiment, absorbent layer **110** comprises from about two to about eight layers of fabric comprising carboxymethylated cellulose fibres.

[0058] In one embodiment in which absorbent layer **110** comprises one or more layers of fabric comprising carboxymethylated cellulose fibres, absorbent layer **110** further comprises stitching to increase the tensile strength and/or the resilience of dressing **100**. In an absorbent layer that includes more than one layer of fabric comprising carboxymethylated cellulose fibres, the stitching can be present in only one or in more than one fabric layer. In one embodiment stitching is present in the fabric layer that is positioned to contact the wound in use of dressing **100**.

[0059] Stitching contemplated by this disclosure can include inelastic threads or yarns and/or resilient thread or yarn. WO 2007/003905 describes dressings in which stitching is used to increase the tensile strength of dressings, which are particularly suitable for use in dressing burns. US 10,117,783 describes dressings in which stitching is used to increase the resilience of dressings, which are particularly suitable for use in dressings placed on body positions where movement occurs, such as joints (e.g., elbows, knees, hips, etc.) or abdomen.

[0060] By resilient is meant that the yarn or thread is able to extend and contract to its former shape. The gathers in the absorbent layer formed by the resilient thread or yarn, enable the absorbent layer to extend and contract with movement so that when, for example, the patient's leg is bent the dressing stretches and when the leg is straightened, the dressing recovers its former size. This resilience means that the absorbent layer maintains close conformability with the wound during movement of the patient. It also means that the dressing has a reduced tendency to delaminate during wear. Having the ability to stretch means that there is less movement between the dressing and the patient which enables a more durable seal between the dressing and the patient's underlying skin.

[0061] Preferably the absorbent layer further comprises lines of longitudinal warp stitches formed from an inelastic thread which stitching is longitudinal in that it is generally parallel to the long dimension of the absorbent layer. The warp stitches are preferably made in the absorbent layer after it has been formed.

[0062] The inelastic warp stitching preferably passes through the whole thickness of the absorbent layer and is visible on both sides. The absorbent layer preferably comprises two or more layers of fabric that are layered together and stitch bonded with lines of longitudinal inelastic warp stitches. The resilient thread is preferably woven in between the stitches of the inelastic warp stitching and in between the sheets of fabric. By having two layers of fabric it is possible to hold the resilient thread or yarn out of direct contact with the wound.

[0063] The resilient thread gathers the absorbent layer and enables it to elongate and then return to shape. The resilient thread can be stitched through the absorbent layer to gather the dressing or woven through a separate line of inelastic warp stitches. The resilient thread can be stitched through the absorbent layer in lines of longitudinal stitches 1 mm to 10 mm apart, more preferably 2 mm to 5 mm apart. The resilient thread is preferably applied to the absorbent layer after the absorbent layer has been formed.

[0064] The lines of inelastic warp stitching may be from 1 mm to 10 mm apart and preferably from 2 mm to 5 mm apart. The lines of inelastic stitching are typically crocheted or knitted and have the appearance of a chain stitch but other stitch patterns may also be used. Preferably, the lines of resilient stitching gather the absorbent layer so that the absorbent layer is able to elongate by 25% to 85%, more preferably 35% to 75% and most preferably 40% to 70% and then recover even when the absorbent layer is hydrated. More preferably, the lines of warp stitching are made in

a yarn or thread such as nylon or polyester or Tencel® (Lenzing Aktiengesellschaft) or any thread which is strong and easily processed. The resilient stitches are made in a resilient yarn such as an elastomeric yarn or Lycra or other yarn which has good stretch and recovery or an elastane yarn which is an elastomeric yarn with greater than 85% polyurethane such as Lycra® (The Lycra Company) or Spandex.

[0065] In one representative way of making absorbent layer **110**, it is made from a non-woven roll made by forming a web of Lyocell which is then hydroentangled. The web is then carboxymethylated by sequential or simultaneous treatment of the cellulosic material with a strong alkali, monochloroacetic acid or a salt thereof. Two webs of the resulting fabric are then fed into a stitch bonding machine and stitched simultaneously with lines of longitudinal stitching in an inelastic yarn and a resilient yarn woven in between the stitches and so secured at the centre of the webs. The resilient yarn gathers the absorbent layer (not shown) and is carried by the inelastic stitch bonded yarn. The resulting layer has a basis weight of 350 gm⁻².

[0066] In another representative way of making absorbent layer **110**, it is made from a tow of carboxymethyl cellulose filaments which has been needlefelted. Two webs of the needlefelted tow are fed into a stitch bonding machine and stitched simultaneously with lines of longitudinal stitching in inelastic yarn and with a resilient yarn woven in between the stitches and so secured at the centre of the webs.

[0067] In one embodiment, absorbent layer **110** is provided with fenestrations to aid the application of negative pressure to the wound and maintain the pathway for fluid from the wound, through the absorbent layer. Typically, however, fenestrations are only provided in internal absorbent layers. External absorbent layers, including those in direct contact with the wound, generally do not have mechanically added fenestrations, however, they do have openings between the fibres.

[0068] Absorbent layer **110** may comprise one or more medicaments. For example an antimicrobial agent, or an antibiotic, or an anaesthetic or an anti-inflammatory agent or a skin protective agent or an odour absorbing agent. In some embodiments, the absorbent layer comprises an antimicrobial agent that can inhibit the growth of gram negative bacteria and/or gram positive bacteria. The antimicrobial agent can kill microbes, inhibit microbes' growth cycle, or disrupt the formation of microbial biofilms. Antimicrobial agents inhibit the growth of bacteria and thus, promote healthy wound healing.

Cover Layer

[0069] Cover layer **120** may be any material that provides a fluid seal. A fluid seal is a seal adequate to maintain reduced pressure at a desired site given the particular reduced pressure source or subsystem involved. The cover layer may be, for example, an impermeable or semi-permeable, elastomeric material. For semi-permeable materials, the permeability must be low enough that for a given reduced-pressure source, the desired reduced pressure may be maintained. The cover layer may be waterproof. In some embodiments, the cover layer comprises polyester, polyurethane (PU), polyvinyl chloride (PVC), silicone elastomer, or fluoropolymers. In some embodiments, the cover layer may comprise polyester or polyurethane film.

[0070] Cover layer **120** is adapted to enable negative pressure to be applied at the wound and defines an aperture therethrough configured for connection to a source of negative pressure. In one embodiment, the aperture comprises a port configured for attachment to a conduit that is, in turn, configured for attachment to a source of negative pressure. The dressing provides a fluid pathway from the wound, through the absorbent layer and the aperture to the conduit. The port is preferably located in that part of the cover layer that overlies the absorbent layer but towards the periphery of the absorbent layer so that it is not directly in vertical alignment with the centre of the dressing (or the wound when in use). This assists in the spread of exudate across the full extent of the absorbent layer.

[0071] In one embodiment, cover layer **120** of dressing **100** is a bacterial and viral barrier layer which preferably resists the ingress of liquid and air but allows moisture vapour transmission. In this way the outer cover layer enhances the overall fluid handling capacity of the dressing by allowing for the escape of moisture vapour through the cover while enabling the application of negative pressure to the wound. The outer cover layer is for instance a layer having a MVTR of at least 10,000 gm^{-2} per 24 hours or in the range of from 10,000 gm^{-2} to 50,000 gm^{-2} per 24 hours measured by the method described in BS EN 13726-2 2002 “Test methods for primary wound dressings Part 2 Moisture vapour transmission rate of permeable film dressings.”. The cover layer may be in the form of a film of polyurethane, for example Epurex 92 T/129 manufactured by Covestro or Inspire 2350 manufactured by Coveris or Medifilm 426 manufactured by Mylan.

Peripheral Adhesive Skin Contact Layer

[0072] Peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **130** may be of the type comprising a homogenous blend of one or more water soluble hydrocolloids and one or more low molecular weight polyisobutylenes such as are described in EP-B-92999 incorporated herein by reference. The water soluble hydrocolloids may be selected from sodium carboxymethylcellulose, pectin, gelatine, guar gum, locust bean gum, karaya gum, and mixtures thereof. The polyisobutylenes may be selected from low molecular weight polyisobutylenes having a viscosity average molecular weight of from 36,000 to 58,000 (Florey). The peripheral adhesive skin contact layer is capable of absorbing exudate while maintaining adhesion of the dressing to the skin.

[0073] Alternatively the adhesive composition may comprise a homogeneous blend of one or more hydrocolloids, one or more low molecular weight polyisobutylenes, one or more styrene block copolymers, mineral oil, butyl rubber, a tackifier and small amounts of optional components. By selection of specific ranges of the amounts of the above listed components, an adhesive composition may be prepared having good adhesion to the skin and stretchability. Such compositions and the preparation therefore are disclosed in EP-B-130061.

[0074] Preferably the composition of peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **130** is such that the removal of an adhesive wound dressing is not traumatic to the patient. Preferably the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer ensures a secure application of the dressing whilst still permitting non-traumatic removal. Non-traumatic dressing removal may be facilitated by using an adhesive which gels slightly upon interaction with a fluid. The gel formation aids dressing removal.

[0075] The term, "hydrocolloid adhesive," as used herein, refers to an adhesive material or substance that comprises a hydrocolloid. The formulation of these adhesives may be modulated to adjust physical properties of the material (e.g., its ability to create a vacuum seal, flexibility, breathability, comfort, size, etc.).

[0076] In some embodiments, the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer is at least 1%, at least 5%, at least 10%, at least 15%, at least 20%, at least 30%, at least 40%, or at least 50 % w/w hydrocolloid.

[0077] Peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **130** is operable to provide a seal between the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer and the skin, thereby preventing exudate leakage.

[0078] In some embodiments disclosed herein, the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer has a thickness of from about 0.1 mm to about 5 mm. In other embodiments, the skin contact layer has a

thickness of from about 0.15 mm to about 3 mm. In yet other embodiments, the skin contact layer has a thickness of from about 0.2 mm to about 2 mm.

[0079] In other embodiments, additional structural layers and/or bonding layers are included in the dressing. With reference to **Figs. 4-6**, dressing **200** includes many features corresponding to those of dressing **100**, and also includes first bonding layer **240**, reinforcing structural support layer **250** (also referred to as structural layer **250**) and second bonding layer **260**. First bonding layer **240** lies between cover layer **220** and absorbent layer **210** and operates to adhere cover layer **220** to absorbent layer **210**. Structural layer **250** overlays peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **230** and functions as a scrim to add stability to peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **230**. Structural layer **240** helps to reduce any tendency of peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **230** to delaminate on dressing removal. Second bonding layer **260** overlies structural layer **250** to bond structural layer **250** and the underlying peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **230** to absorbent layer **210**. As shown most clearly in **Fig. 6**, second bonding layer **260** and structural layer **250** also define a window cut therefrom that coincide with window **234** in peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **230** to enable direct contact between absorbent layer **210** and an underlying wound.

[0080] Absorbent layer **210** has first surface **212** for contacting a wound and second surface **214** opposite first surface **212**, and has perimeter border **216** having dimensions greater than the dimensions of a wound to be covered by dressing **200**. Cover layer **220** has first surface **222** facing absorbent layer **210** and has second surface **224** opposite first surface **222**, and has perimeter border **226** that extends beyond perimeter border **216** of absorbent layer **210**. As such, perimeter border **226** has dimensions greater than dimensions of perimeter border **216** of absorbent layer **210**. Between first surface **222** of cover layer **220** and second surface **214** of absorbent layer **210** is positioned first bonding layer **240**. Between peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **230** and first surface **212** of absorbent layer **210** adjacent its perimeter border **216** are situated structural layer **250** and second bonding layer **260**, oriented such that structural layer **250** is adjacent to, and bonded to, peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **230**, and second bonding layer **260** is situated between structural layer **250** and first surface **212** of absorbent layer **210**, thereby bonding structural layer **250** to absorbent layer **210** in the area of peripheral border **216** of absorbent layer **210**. Peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **230** has an inner edge **232** that coincides with inner edges of structural

layer **250** and second bonding layer **260**, together defining a window **234** through which first surface **212** of absorbent layer **210** is able to contact a wound over which dressing **200** is applied.

[0081] As shown most clearly in **Figs. 5 and 6**, in area **290** between perimeter borders **216** and **226**, peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **230** is bonded to structural layer **250**, which is bonded to second adhesive layer **260**, which is bonded to first adhesive layer **240**, which is bonded to cover layer **220**. With these layers bonded together as shown, when peripheral skin contact layer **230** is affixed to a patient's skin surrounding a wound, peripheral skin contact layer **230**, structural layer **250**, second bonding layer **260** and first bonding layer **240**, together with cover layer **220** and the patient's skin, form an airtight seal around the perimeter of dressing **200**, providing therein a sealed chamber in which the patient's wound is in fluid communication with absorbent layer **210** and with aperture **228** in cover layer **220**.

Structural Layer

[0082] In some embodiments, structural layer **250** comprises a polymer selected from, but not limited to, polypropyleneoxide, polyurethane, polyacrylate, ethylene vinyl acetate, and combinations thereof. In some embodiments, the polymer is formed into a thin film. In some embodiments, the structural layer comprises a polyurethane film.

First Bonding Layer

[0083] In some embodiments, first bonding layer **240** comprises an adhesive. In some embodiments, bonding layer **240** comprises a hydrocolloid adhesive, for example Pectin, Gelatin, NaCMC – Sodium Carboxymethyl Cellulose. The adhesive may be at least 1%, at least 5%, at least 10%, at least 15%, at least 20%, at least 30%, at least 40%, or at least 50 % w/w hydrocolloid. First bonding layer **240** can be composed of the same hydrocolloid adhesive as peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **230** or can be composed of a different adhesive than peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **230**.

[0084] In some embodiments, first bonding layer **240** has a thickness of from about 0.1 mm to about 5 mm. In some embodiments, first bonding layer **240** has a thickness of from about 0.2 mm to about 3 mm. In some embodiments, first bonding layer **240** has a thickness of from about 0.2 mm to about 2 mm. In some embodiments, first bonding layer **240** has a thickness of from 0.2 mm to about 1 mm.

Second Bonding Layer

[0085] In some embodiments, second bonding layer **260** comprises an adhesive. In some embodiments, second bonding layer **260** comprises a hydrocolloid adhesive, for example Pectin, Gelatin, NaCMC – Sodium Carboxymethyl Cellulose. The adhesive may be at least 1%, at least 5%, at least 10%, at least 15%, at least 20%, at least 30%, at least 40%, or at least 50 % w/w hydrocolloid. Second bonding layer **260** can be composed of the same hydrocolloid adhesive as peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **230** or can be composed of a different adhesive than peripheral adhesive skin contact layer **230**.

[0086] In some embodiments, second bonding layer **260** has a thickness of from about 0.1 mm to about 5 mm. In some embodiments, second bonding layer **260** has a thickness of from about 0.2 mm to about 3 mm. In some embodiments, second bonding layer **260** has a thickness of from about 0.2 mm to about 2 mm. In some embodiments, second bonding layer **260** has a thickness of from 0.2 mm to about 1 mm.

[0087] In other embodiments of the disclosure, a negative pressure distribution layer is included in the dressing. With reference to **Figs. 7 and 8**, dressing **300** includes many features corresponding to those of dressings **100** and **200**, and also includes negative pressure distribution layer **370** positioned between absorbent layer **310** and cover layer **320**. In the embodiment shown, first bonding layer **340** is situated between negative pressure distribution layer **370** and cover layer **320**. It is to be understood, however, that additional layers may be included in dressing **300** (and in other dressing embodiments described herein) between and/or among the layers shown without departing from the disclosure. For example, in one embodiment (not shown), negative pressure distribution layer **370** is positioned within absorbent layer **310** or, stated alternatively, dressing **300** includes two absorbent layers, one being positioned as shown in **Figs. 7 and 8** (absorbent layer **310**) and another being positioned, fully or partly, between pressure distribution layer **370** and cover layer **320**. Both absorbent layers in such an embodiment can be composed of materials as described herein in connection with absorbent layers **110**, **210**, **310**, and can have the same composition as one another or different compositions from one another. In such an embodiment, one or more additional bonding layers (not shown) may also be included, if desired, to achieve acceptable bonding of layers to one another within the dressing.

[0088] In device **300**, negative pressure distribution layer **370** has length and width dimensions corresponding to the length and width dimensions of absorbent layer **310**. In other embodiments, negative pressure distribution layer **370** has dimensions different than absorbent layer **310**. With the layers bonded together as shown, when peripheral skin contact layer **330** is affixed to a patient's skin surrounding a wound, negative pressure distribution layer **370**, is also situated, along with absorbent layer **310**, within an airtight sealed chamber of dressing **300** that is formed by peripheral skin contact layer **330**, structural layer **350**, second bonding layer **360** and first bonding layer **340**, together with cover layer **320** and the patient's skin. Within the chamber, the patient's wound is in fluid communication with absorbent layer **310**, negative pressure distribution layer **370** and aperture **228** in cover layer **320**.

Negative Pressure Distribution Layer

[0089] In some embodiments, negative pressure distribution layer **370** is gas and liquid permeable and particularly moisture vapour permeable and serves to aid access of exudate to a greater area of absorbent layer **310** by distributing negative pressure laterally over dressing **300** and allowing exudate to spread under negative pressure distribution layer **370**. Negative pressure distribution layer **370** also serves to even out the negative pressure applied to the wound over the whole dressing. Negative pressure distribution layer **370** preferably distributes exudate and negative pressure over the dressing. In this way, uptake of exudate by absorbent layer **310** is maximised and a more uniform transfer of negative pressure to the wound, or dressing **300**, is optimized.

[0090] In some embodiments, negative pressure distribution layer **370** is a foam layer such as a polyester foam of the type XD4200AS manufactured by Caligen or another suitable reticulated foam. In other embodiments, negative pressure distribution layer **370** can comprise or be formed from any suitable material, for example, a material which can allow the transport of negative pressures to a wound site and/or which can channel and/or wick wound fluid and/or wound debris away from the wound site. For example, negative pressure distribution layer **370** can comprise or be formed from a material selected from the group consisting of a nonwoven material, a polymer and a combination thereof. In some embodiments, negative pressure distribution layer **370** may be formed from a nonwoven material. The nonwoven material may comprise natural fibers, synthetic fibers, continuous fibers, staple fibers, discontinuous fibers, bicomponent fibers and combinations thereof. In some embodiments, the nonwoven material may comprise polyolefin fibers (e.g.,

polypropylene, polyethylene), polyester, polyethylene terephthalate (PET), nylon, cotton, and combinations and copolymers thereof. A nonwoven material may be formed from various process known in the art, for example, meltblowing processes, spunbonding processes, spunlaid processes, airlaid processes, wetlaid processes, thermal bonded processes, bonded carded web processes, and combinations thereof. Examples of non-woven materials include, but are not limited to, co-polyester from Libeltex BVBA and HRM or polyolefin fibers in a matrix from Essentra.

[0091] In some embodiments, negative pressure distribution layer **370** may be formed from a polymer, for example, a thermoplastic elastomer (TPE), silicone, or a foam. Examples of TPE include, but are not limited to styrene ethylene butylene styrene (SEBS) copolymers or thermoplastic polyurethane (TPU). Negative pressure distribution layer **370** may be formed by combining sheets of TPE or TPU having a thickness between about 0.2 mm and about 2.0 mm. In some embodiments, the sheets of TPE or TPU may be bonded, welded, adhered, or otherwise coupled to one another. For example, in some embodiments, the sheets of TPE or TPU may be welded using radiant heat, radio-frequency welding, or laser welding. Supracor, Inc., Hexacor, Ltd., Hexcel Corp., and Econocorp, Inc. may produce suitable TPE or TPU sheets for the formation of negative pressure distribution layer **370**. In some embodiments, negative pressure distribution layer **370** may be formed from a 3D textile, also referred to as a spacer fabric. Suitable 3D textiles may be produced by Heathcoat Fabrics, Ltd., Baltex, and Mueller Textil Group.

[0092] In some embodiments, negative pressure distribution layer **370** may be formed from foam. For example, cellular foam, open-cell foam, reticulated foam, or porous tissue collections, may be used to form negative pressure distribution layer **370**. In some embodiments, negative pressure distribution layer **370** may be formed of grey foam or Zotefoam. Grey foam may be polyester polyurethane foam having about 60 pores per inch (ppi). Zotefoam may be a closed-cell, cross-linked polyolefin foam. In some non-limiting examples, negative pressure distribution layer **370** may comprise or consist essentially of be reticulated polyurethane foam such as found in GRANUFOAM™ dressing or V.A.C. VERAFLOR™ dressing, both available from Kinetic Concepts, Inc. of San Antonio, Texas.

[0093] In some embodiments, negative pressure distribution layer **370** may comprise or consist essentially of foam that is mechanically or chemically compressed to increase the density of the foam at ambient pressure. Foam that is mechanically or chemically compressed may be referred to as compressed foam or felted foam. Compressed foam may be characterized by a firmness factor,

which may be defined as a ratio of the density of foam in a compressed state to the density of the same foam in an uncompressed state. For example, a firmness factor of 5 may refer to compressed foam having a density that is five times greater than a density of the same foam in an uncompressed state. Mechanically or chemically compressing foam may also reduce a thickness of the foam at ambient pressure when compared to the same foam that has not been compressed. Reducing a thickness of foam by mechanical or chemical compression may increase a density of the foam, which may increase the firmness factor of the foam. Increasing the firmness factor of foam may increase a stiffness of the foam in a direction that is parallel to a thickness of the foam. For example, increasing a firmness factor of negative pressure distribution layer 370 may increase a stiffness of negative pressure distribution layer 370 in a direction that is parallel to the thickness of the layer. In some embodiments, negative pressure distribution layer 370 may have a density of about 0.03 grams per centimeter³ (g/cm³) in its uncompressed state. In its compressed state, negative pressure distribution layer 370 may have a firmness factor (FF) of about 5, and the density may be about 0.15 g/cm³.

[0094] Generally, if compressed foam is subjected to negative pressure, the compressed foam exhibits less deformation or compression set than a similar uncompressed foam. If negative pressure distribution layer 370 is formed of compressed foam, the thickness of negative pressure distribution layer 370 may deform less than if negative pressure distribution layer 370 is formed of a comparable uncompressed foam. The decrease in deformation may be caused by the increased stiffness as reflected by the firmness factor. If subjected to the stress of negative pressure, negative pressure distribution layer 370 formed of compressed foam may flatten less than negative pressure distribution layer 370 that is formed from uncompressed foam. Consequently, when negative pressure is applied to negative pressure distribution layer 370, the stiffness of negative pressure distribution layer 370 in the direction parallel to the thickness of negative pressure distribution layer 370 can allow negative pressure distribution layer 370 to be more compliant or compressible in other directions, e.g., a direction parallel to the wound surface. The pore size of a foam material may vary according to needs of negative pressure distribution layer 370 and the amount of compression of the foam. For example, in some embodiments, uncompressed foam may have pore sizes in a range of about 400 microns to about 600 microns. If the same foam is compressed, the pore sizes may be smaller than when the foam is in its uncompressed state.

[0095] In some embodiments, negative pressure distribution layer 370 may be formed from a polymer via injection molding or extrusion techniques.

[0096] In some embodiments, negative pressure distribution layer 370 may be a single layer, for example as shown in **Figs. 7 and 8**. Alternatively, negative pressure distribution layer 370 may be multilayered. For example, negative pressure distribution layer 370 may comprise two or more layers, three or more layers, four or more layers, etc.

Dressing used in Vacuum Wound Therapy

[0097] In another aspect of the present disclosure, the dressing described in previous embodiments contains a connector to be used for fluid communication through the layers. In one embodiment, a connector is coupled to the cover layer such that the connector allows fluid communication with the sealed space beneath the cover layer. The connector is affixed to the aperture in the cover layer. The connector can be connected to a device used to produce a vacuum (such as a vacuum pump) in order to produce a reduced pressure under the cover layer.

[0098] In some embodiments, the connector can be constructed from semi-rigid material such as polyurethane film or polyvinyl chloride. Non-limiting examples of rigid or semi-rigid materials include silicone, acrylics, cyanoacrylate, rubbers, foams, cellulose, polyurethanes, polyethylenes, polyvinyl chlorides, ethylenevinyl acetates, polypropylenes, polytetrafluorethylenes, and polyisobutylenes. In some embodiments, the connector may contain additional textile material layers in order to slow down or modulate exudate draining. In some embodiments, the connector may optionally contain a change disk indicator to alert the user when it is time to change the dressing.

[0099] In other embodiments, dressings disclosed herein can be configured for connection to a vacuum pump or other negative pressure source, for example, using flexible tubes. In this way, a fluid communication pathway is provided from the wound, through one or more layers of absorbent material disposed in the dressing, to the negative pressure source. The fluid communication pathway may extend through an aperture in the cover layer to the interior lumen of a tube, optionally via the interior lumen or conduit of a flexible connector. A typical flexible connector is elongate with an interior lumen or conduit that runs parallel to the longitudinal axis of the flexible connector, wherein the flexible connector is attachable to the opening in the cover layer of the dressing in an orientation such that the longitudinal axis of the flexible connector is substantially parallel to the plane of the cover layer. The flexible member may comprise a head portion for securement to the

cover layer via adhesive or other means. Typically, the fluid communication pathway extends from the interior lumen or conduit of the flexible connector through the opening in the cover layer in a direction substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the flexible connector. Once secured, a fluid-tight seal may be formed between the flexible connector and the cover layer.

[00100] In use, the dressing embodiments described herein may be secured to the skin surrounding a wound and to a conduit that is configured for connection to a source of negative pressure by a connector located at the distal end of the conduit. Negative pressure is applied to the wound by the application of negative pressure through a pathway for fluid leading from the wound, through the absorbent layer, the aperture in the cover layer and to the distal end of the conduit. Optional fenestrations that may be present in the absorbent layer, assist with the absorbance of exudate and that application of negative pressure.

Device for Vacuum Wound Therapy

[00101] In another aspect of this present disclosure, the dressing according to any embodiment disclosed herein can include a mobile vacuum pump affixed the dressing in fluid communication with the aperture defined in the cover layer of the dressing. In some embodiments, the dressing includes an “on board” vacuum system that includes a pump that is sufficiently small to be attached directly to the dressing. Such a configuration enables the manufacture and use of disposable dressing/pump combinations.

[00102] While a number of discrete embodiments have been described, aspects of each embodiment may not be specific to only that embodiment and it is specifically contemplated that features of embodiments may be combined with features of other embodiments. As will be appreciated from the descriptions herein and the associated Figures, a wide variety of aspects and embodiments are contemplated by the present disclosure, examples of which include, without limitation, the aspects and embodiments listed below:

[00103] A unitary negative pressure wound dressing construct that includes: (i) an absorbent layer having a first surface for contacting a wound and a second surface opposite the first surface, the absorbent layer comprising a gelling absorbent material, wherein the absorbent layer has a perimeter border, (ii) a cover layer having a first surface facing the absorbent layer and a second surface opposite the first surface, wherein the cover layer has a perimeter border having dimensions greater than dimensions of the absorbent layer perimeter such that the perimeter border of the cover

layer extends beyond the perimeter border of the absorbent layer, and (iii) a peripheral adhesive skin contact layer attached to the first surface of the absorbent layer adjacent the perimeter border of the absorbent layer, wherein the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer defines a window through which the absorbent layer is able to contact the wound, and wherein the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer comprises a hydrocolloid adhesive, wherein the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer has a perimeter border having dimensions greater than the dimensions of the absorbent layer perimeter such that the perimeter border of the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer extends beyond the perimeter border of the absorbent layer, wherein the perimeter border of the cover layer and the perimeter border of the peripheral skin contact layer are bonded together to form a seal, wherein the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer is operable to adhere to skin surrounding a wound, and wherein the cover layer defines an aperture configured for connection to a source of negative pressure.

[00104] A dressing in accordance with any other embodiment disclosed herein, wherein the dimensions of the perimeter border of the absorbent layer are greater than dimensions of a wound to be covered by the dressing.

[00105] A dressing in accordance with any other embodiment disclosed herein, wherein the cover layer is water impermeable and air and vapour permeable.

[00106] A dressing in accordance with any other embodiment disclosed herein, wherein the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer and the cover layer are operable to form an air-tight seal between the absorbent layer and an external environment of the dressing when the dressing is applied over a wound and a source of negative pressure is sealingly connected to the aperture.

[00107] A dressing in accordance with any other embodiment disclosed herein, wherein the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer has a thickness of from about 0.1 mm to about 5 mm.

[00108] A dressing in accordance with any other embodiment disclosed herein, wherein the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer has a width of from about 2 cm to about 6 cm.

[00109] A dressing in accordance with any other embodiment disclosed herein, further comprising a first bonding layer positioned between the absorbent layer and the cover layer.

[00110] A dressing in accordance with any other embodiment disclosed herein, wherein the first bonding layer comprises a layer of hydrocolloid adhesive.

[00111] A dressing in accordance with any other embodiment disclosed herein, wherein the first bonding layer has a thickness of from about 0.2 mm to about 2 mm.

[00112] A dressing in accordance with any other embodiment disclosed herein, further comprising a structural layer corresponding to the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer and having a first surface bonded to the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer, and a second bonding layer corresponding to the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer and positioned in contact with a second surface of the structural layer that is opposite the first surface of the structural layer, wherein the structural layer is positioned between, and sealingly bonded to, the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer and the second bonding layer, and wherein the second bonding layer is sealingly bonded to a continuous portion of the first surface of the absorbent layer that is adjacent the full perimeter border of the absorbent layer.

[00113] A dressing in accordance with any other embodiment disclosed herein, wherein the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer, the second bonding layer and the cover layer are operable to form an air-tight seal between the absorbent layer and an external environment of the dressing when the dressing is applied over a wound and a source of negative pressure is sealingly connected to the aperture.

[00114] A dressing in accordance with any other embodiment disclosed herein, wherein the structural layer comprises a polyurethane film.

[00115] A dressing in accordance with any other embodiment disclosed herein, wherein the second bonding layer has a thickness of from about 0.2 mm to about 2 mm.

[00116] A dressing in accordance with any other embodiment disclosed herein, further comprising a first bonding layer positioned between the absorbent layer and the cover layer, a structural layer corresponding to the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer and having a first surface bonded to the adhesive skin contact layer, and a second bonding layer corresponding to the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer and positioned in contact with a second surface of the structural layer that is opposite the first surface of the structural layer, wherein the structural layer is positioned between, and sealingly bonded to, the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer and the second bonding layer, and wherein the second bonding layer is sealingly bonded to a continuous portion of the first surface of the absorbent layer that is adjacent the full perimeter border of the absorbent layer.

[00117] A dressing in accordance with any other embodiment disclosed herein, wherein the gelling absorbent material comprises a gel-forming fiber or filament.

[00118] A dressing in accordance with any other embodiment disclosed herein, wherein the gel-forming fiber or filament comprising chemically-modified cellulose, alginate, carboxymethyl cellulose, or combinations thereof.

[00119] A dressing in accordance with any other embodiment disclosed herein, wherein the absorbent layer comprises stitches.

[00120] A dressing in accordance with any other embodiment disclosed herein, wherein the absorbent layer further comprises an antimicrobial agent.

[00121] A dressing in accordance with any other embodiment disclosed herein, wherein the cover layer comprises a member selected from the group consisting of a polyurethane (PU), a polyvinyl chloride (PVC), a silicone elastomer, a fluoropolymer, and combinations thereof.

[00122] A dressing in accordance with any other embodiment disclosed herein, further comprising a source of negative pressure sealingly connected to the aperture and in fluid communication with the absorbent layer.

[00123] A dressing in accordance with any other embodiment disclosed herein, wherein the source of negative pressure comprises a pump connected to the aperture with a conduit.

[00124] A dressing in accordance with any other embodiment disclosed herein, further comprising a negative pressure distribution layer positioned between the absorbent layer and the cover layer.

[00125] A dressing in accordance with any other embodiment disclosed herein, wherein the negative pressure distribution layer comprises an open cell foam layer.

[00126] A dressing in accordance with any other embodiment disclosed herein, wherein the open cell foam layer is hydrophobic.

[00127] A dressing in accordance with any other embodiment disclosed herein, further comprising a connector attached to the cover layer over the aperture and configured for connection to a conduit to communicate negative pressure from the conduit to the wound through the aperture.

[00128] A dressing in accordance with any other embodiment disclosed herein, wherein the connector comprises polyurethane or polyvinylchloride.

[00129] A dressing in accordance with any other embodiment disclosed herein, wherein the connector comprises a change indicator.

[00130] A disposable negative pressure wound therapy device that includes: (i) a disposable pump for generating negative pressure, and (ii) a dressing in accordance with any dressing

embodiment disclosed herein for covering and protecting a wound, wherein the cover layer defines an aperture connected to the pump.

[00131] A device in accordance with any other embodiment disclosed herein, further comprising: (iii) a conduit defining a lumen that provides fluid communication between the pump and the aperture defined in the cover layer of the dressing, whereby operation of the pump creates negative pressure at the site of a wound when the dressing is affixed over the wound by pressure sealing the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer to skin surrounding the wound.

[00132] While embodiments of the present disclosure have been shown and described herein, it is to be understood by those skilled in the art that such embodiments are provided by way of example only. Numerous variations, changes, and substitutions will now occur to those skilled in the art without departing from the invention. It should be understood that various alternatives to the embodiments of the invention described herein may be employed in practicing the invention. It is intended that the following claims define the scope of the invention and that methods and structures within the scope of these claims and their equivalents be covered thereby.

CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A unitary negative pressure wound dressing construct comprising:
 - an absorbent layer having a first surface for contacting a wound and a second surface opposite the first surface, the absorbent layer comprising a gelling absorbent material, wherein the absorbent layer has a perimeter border,
 - a cover layer having a first surface facing the absorbent layer and a second surface opposite the first surface, wherein the cover layer has a perimeter border having dimensions greater than dimensions of the absorbent layer perimeter such that the perimeter border of the cover layer extends beyond the perimeter border of the absorbent layer, and
 - a peripheral adhesive skin contact layer attached to the first surface of the absorbent layer adjacent the perimeter border of the absorbent layer, wherein the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer defines a window through which the absorbent layer is able to contact the wound, and wherein the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer comprises a hydrocolloid adhesive,
 - wherein the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer has a perimeter border having dimensions greater than the dimensions of the absorbent layer perimeter such that the perimeter border of the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer extends beyond the perimeter border of the absorbent layer,
 - wherein the perimeter border of the cover layer and the perimeter border of the peripheral skin contact layer are bonded together to form a seal,
 - wherein the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer is operable to adhere to skin surrounding a wound, and
 - wherein the cover layer defines an aperture configured for connection to a source of negative pressure.
2. The dressing of claim 1, wherein the dimensions of the perimeter border of the absorbent layer are greater than dimensions of a wound to be covered by the dressing.
3. The dressing of claim 1, wherein the cover layer is water impermeable and air and vapour permeable.
4. The dressing of claim 1, wherein the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer and the cover layer are operable to form an air-tight seal between the absorbent layer and an external environment

of the dressing when the dressing is applied over a wound and a source of negative pressure is sealingly connected to the aperture.

5. The dressing of claim 1, wherein the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer has a thickness of from about 0.1 mm to about 5 mm.

6. The dressing of claim 1, wherein the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer has a width of from about 2 cm to about 6 cm.

7. The dressing of claim 1, further comprising a first bonding layer positioned between the absorbent layer and the cover layer.

8. The dressing of claim 7, wherein the first bonding layer comprises a layer of hydrocolloid adhesive.

9. The dressing of claim 7, wherein the first bonding layer has a thickness of from about 0.2 mm to about 2 mm.

10. The dressing of claim 1, further comprising:

a structural layer corresponding to the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer and having a first surface bonded to the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer, and

a second bonding layer corresponding to the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer and positioned in contact with a second surface of the structural layer that is opposite the first surface of the structural layer,

wherein the structural layer is positioned between, and sealingly bonded to, the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer and the second bonding layer, and

wherein the second bonding layer is sealingly bonded to a continuous portion of the first surface of the absorbent layer that is adjacent the full perimeter border of the absorbent layer.

11. The dressing of claim 10, wherein the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer, the second bonding layer and the cover layer are operable to form an air-tight seal between the absorbent layer and an external environment of the dressing when the dressing is applied over a wound and a source of negative pressure is sealingly connected to the aperture.

12. The dressing of claim 10, wherein the structural layer comprises a polyurethane film.

13. The dressing of claim 10, wherein the second bonding layer has a thickness of from about 0.2 mm to about 2 mm.

14. The dressing of claim 1, further comprising:

a first bonding layer positioned between the absorbent layer and the cover layer,

a structural layer corresponding to the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer and having a first surface bonded to the adhesive skin contact layer, and

a second bonding layer corresponding to the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer and positioned in contact with a second surface of the structural layer that is opposite the first surface of the structural layer,

wherein the structural layer is positioned between, and sealingly bonded to, the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer and the second bonding layer, and

wherein the second bonding layer is sealingly bonded to a continuous portion of the first surface of the absorbent layer that is adjacent the full perimeter border of the absorbent layer.

15. The dressing of claims 1, wherein the gelling absorbent material comprises a gel-forming fiber or filament.
16. The dressing of claim 15, wherein the gel-forming fiber or filament comprising chemically-modified cellulose, alginate, carboxymethyl cellulose, or combinations thereof.
17. The dressing of claim 15, wherein the absorbent layer comprises stitches.
18. The dressing of claim 1 wherein the absorbent layer further comprises an antimicrobial agent.
19. The dressing of claim 1, wherein the cover layer comprises a member selected from the group consisting of a polyurethane (PU), a polyvinyl chloride (PVC), a silicone elastomer, a fluoropolymer, and combinations thereof.
20. The dressing of claim 1, further comprising a source of negative pressure sealingly connected to the aperture and in fluid communication with the absorbent layer.
21. The dressing of claim 20, wherein the source of negative pressure comprises a pump connected to the aperture with a conduit.
22. The dressing of claim 1, further comprising a negative pressure distribution layer positioned between the absorbent layer and the cover layer.
23. The dressing of claim 22, wherein the negative pressure distribution layer comprises an open cell foam layer.
24. The dressing of claim 23, wherein the open cell foam layer is hydrophobic.
25. The dressing of claim 1, further comprising a connector attached to the cover layer over the aperture and configured for connection to a conduit to communicate negative pressure from the conduit to the wound through the aperture.

26. The dressing of claim 25, wherein the connector comprises polyurethane or polyvinylchloride.
27. The dressing of claim 25, wherein the connector comprises a change indicator.
28. A disposable negative pressure wound therapy device, comprising:
a disposable pump for generating negative pressure, and
a dressing for covering and protecting a wound, the dressing comprising:
an absorbent layer having a first surface for contacting a wound and a second surface opposite the first surface, the absorbent layer comprising a gelling absorbent material, wherein the absorbent layer has a perimeter border having dimensions greater than the dimensions of a wound to be covered by the dressing,
a cover layer having a first surface facing the absorbent layer and a second surface opposite the first surface, wherein the cover layer is water impermeable and air permeable, wherein the cover layer has a perimeter border having dimensions at least as great as the dimensions of the absorbent layer perimeter, and wherein a portion of the cover layer adjacent the perimeter of the cover layer is bonded to a portion of the absorbent layer adjacent the perimeter border of the absorbent layer, and
a peripheral adhesive skin contact layer attached to the first surface of the absorbent layer adjacent the perimeter border of the absorbent layer, wherein the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer defines a window through which the absorbent layer is able to contact the wound, and wherein the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer comprises a hydrocolloid adhesive,
wherein the cover layer defines an aperture connected to the pump.
29. The device of claim 28, further comprising a conduit defining a lumen that provides fluid communication between the pump and the aperture defined in the cover layer of the dressing, whereby operation of the pump creates negative pressure at the site of a wound when the dressing is affixed over the wound by pressure sealing the peripheral adhesive skin contact layer to skin surrounding the wound.