Eliminating nasal bridge skin breakdown at Lehigh Valley – Hazleton

An interview with
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Nestled in the heart of Hazleton, this 100-bed hospital in Lehigh Valley has completely eliminated nasal bridge breakdown with the F&P Visairo™ Full Face, Bridge-free™ NIV mask.

Facility overview

With 12 beds dedicated to the ICU and 25 in the emergency department, the facility is kept busy providing critical care to their patients. Among a variety of treatments offered for respiratory support, bi-level non-invasive ventilation (NIV) therapy is common, especially for elderly and obese patients presenting with chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD). On any given day, at least 10 patients might be receiving NIV therapy, often for 48 to 72 hours at a stretch.

NIV interface management prior to F&P

Before the introduction of the F&P Visairo mask, the hospital followed a 4-hour mask rotation protocol. This involved alternating between a traditional over-the-nose full face mask and a total face mask, supplemented with protective gel pads to mitigate pressure injuries, particularly on the nasal bridge. Despite these precautions, the facility would experience between 6-8 serious pressure injury incidents annually, predominantly among patients requiring prolonged NIV therapy.

Transitioning to the F&P Visairo mask

Driven by a fervent desire to enhance patient care and improve workflow efficiency, the hospital adopted the use of the F&P Visairo mask. Staff quickly recognized the Visairo mask's potential to eliminate nasal bridge breakdown, thereby improving patient care and reducing the burden of pressure-injury management on their staff.

Following training and education provided by the local F&P representative and a full year of implementation, the results were precisely what they had targeted. The facility reported zero instances of skin breakdown or pressure injuries for the entire year of using the F&P Visairo mask. In addition, the elimination of a mask rotation and skin barrier protocol not only enabled financial cost savings but also reduced time spent on mask and skin management as staff no longer needed to refit masks every 4 hours and apply protective gel pads.

The transition to the F&P Visairo mask also brought about a noticeable improvement in patient satisfaction and tolerance to NIV therapy as well. Staff noticed the bridge-free mask design minimised leaks into patient's eyes and alleviated their feelings of claustrophobia.

One memorable case involved a large-sized patient with a thick beard, frequently admitted with acute COPD exacerbations. Initially skeptical, the staff successfully fitted the F&P Visairo mask without any challenges with leak and recounted a noticeable improvement in the patient's work of breathing, attributing this to the increase in comfort for the patient and the mask's seal performance.

Advice from a facility that has eliminated nasal bridge skin breakdown

The staff's advice to other facilities is clear: embrace the benefits of the bridge-free mask. The F&P Visairo mask has transformed their experience with NIV therapy for the better by eliminating skin breakdown, reducing costs spent on consumables, and alleviating the workflow challenges of pressure-injury management. Staff also advised to trust in the training provided and to be confident in using the F&P Visairo mask as the default NIV mask without being tempted to reach for the traditional over-the-nose configuration like they once used to.

In conclusion, standardizing use of the F&P Visairo mask over the last year has enabled Lehigh Valley Hospital to reduce costs, minimize staff time spent on NIV-related pressure injury management and noticeably improve patient care and outcomes by completely eliminating nasal bridge breakdown.

The matters expressed in this written testimonial are presented by Director of Respiratory Therapy Robert Leshko based on personal experience of patients under his care at Lehigh Valley Hospital and do not necessarily represent the views of Fisher & Paykel Healthcare or any of its employees, officers or directors.

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