Introduction:
Epidermolysis Bullosa (EB) is a group of rare genetic skin conditions which cause the skin to blister and tear at the slightest touch. Painful open wounds form where this exceptionally fragile skin is damaged and in some cases, internal linings and organs are also affected. Complications include secondary infection and extensive scarring. The impact upon the child’s life cannot be underestimated.

There are three main types of EB:
1. Simplex (EBS): Most common form of EB accounts for approximately 70% of diagnoses. Characterised by a lack of adhesion of the skin in the Epidermis and manifests itself as blistering.
2. Dystrophic (DEB): May be inherited as a dominant or recessive trait accounting for approximately 20% of diagnoses which is characterised by a lack of adhesion of the skin under the basement membrane, in the Dermis. This form of EB has the tendency for blisters to heal with scarring, leading to contraction of the joints, fusion of the fingers and toes, contraction of the oral mucosal membranes and narrowing of the oesophagus.
3. Junctional (JEB): Characterised by a lack of adhesion of the skin through the basement membrane in the Dermal/Epidermal Junction and affects up to 10% of patients diagnosed with EB (Either Intermediate or Severe).

Lisa and Victoria (EB Clinical Nurse Specialists) at Birmingham Children’s Hospital evaluated ALLEVYN Gentle Border as a primary dressing to manage such wounds in challenging anatomical locations with children living with EB. Some of the experiences from this evaluation are illustrated below:

Case A:
- 3-year-old girl
- Recessive Dystrophic Epidermolysis Bullosa – severe
- Under the care of Birmingham Children’s Hospital since birth
- Currently at nursery and to start pre-school soon
- Would like to run and play

Management Challenges:
- Active 3-year-old
- Fragility of skin
- Mild-moderate exudate levels
- Keeping dressing in place
- Fear of trying something new
- Time needed for dressing changes prior to bed – up to two hours
- Prep time. Mepitel™ and Mepilex™ requires cutting to make them into an appropriate size/shape.

Previous treatments:
- Mepilex Border Lite
- Mepitel
- Mepilex Transfer
- Dressing changes every other day

Treatment:
- Use of ALLEVYN Gentle Border – abdomen/thighs/ side/back
- Use of ALLEVYN Gentle Border Multisite – knees

Outcomes:
- Size and shape of ALLEVYN Gentle Border better than previous treatments
- Wounds protected and secure
- Dressings stayed in place
- ‘Finally a dressing that isn’t square! Who has square wounds?’ – quote from Mum

Case B:
- 5-year-old girl
- Dominant Dystrophic Epidermolysis Bullosa
- No other underlying medical conditions

Management challenges:
- Challenging anatomical areas to apply dressings to
- Challenging anatomical areas to keep dressings in place
- Mum wanted to have a dressing that securely covered her daughter’s knees as they were prone to breaking down at the slightest knock
- The child wears knee length socks for school but when using previous dressings, if the socks rolled down or her socks had to be removed - it would often pull the dressing off of the child’s knees causing further skin damage
- The child had become conscious of the fact that unlike other children, she would always have dressings on her knees
- Mild – moderate exudate levels requiring appropriate management
- Fragility of skin

Previous treatments:
- Mepilex Border Lite and Mepitel
- Dressings changed on a daily basis or more frequently if required

Current Treatment:
- ALLEVYN Gentle Border Multisite – knees and lower leg

Outcomes:
- The child liked the colour of the ALLEVYN Gentle Border. ALLEVYN Gentle Border gave the child a sense of confidence when wearing these dressings
- ALLEVYN Gentle Border stayed in place throughout the school day despite wearing knee high socks
- The shape of ALLEVYN Gentle Border conformed well to the shape of the knee
- No trauma to surrounding skin upon dressing removal
- Dressing changes reduced to every one to three days

DEBRA is the national charity that supports individuals and families affected by EB. DEBRA promotes joint working to improve the quality of life for people living with EB, but in no way endorses this product. A charity registered in England and Wales (1084958) and Scotland (SC039654).