PURPOSE:
The purpose of applying butterfly strips is to close a small wound or to support an existing suture line when stitches are in place or after stitches have been removed.

CONSIDERATIONS:
1. Butterfly strips may be used in place of stitches when the wound is small and the skin area to be closed is not subject to a lot of movement or tension.
2. For primary skin closure, allow strips to remain 3 to 5 days on the head and neck, 5 to 7 days on the chest and abdomen, and 7 to 10 days on an extremity.
3. Butterfly strips are available commercially or may be fashioned out of paper or adhesive tape.

EQUIPMENT:
- Gloves
- Butterfly strips (available commercially or can be made from tape)
- Skin protectant (optional)
- Antiseptic wipes and/or solution (optional)
- Cotton applicators
- Tape
- Scissors

PROCEDURE:
1. Adhere to Standard Precautions.
2. Explain procedure to patient.
3. If butterfly strips are to be applied after suture removal. (See Integumentary – Removal of Suture or Removal of Staple or Clip before proceeding.)
4. To make butterfly strip: Fold one 3 inch strip of 1/2 inch wide adhesive tape back on itself and cut off the corners evenly at the folded end to form broad nicks. Paper tapes may be used in a 3 inch strip, 1/4 of an inch wide with nicking.
5. Thoroughly cleanse skin with antiseptic wipes and/or solution using cotton applicators.
6. Apply skin protectant, as needed, closely along the wound's edges and to a width that will be approximately as wide as the length of the butterfly strips. Allow to air dry.
7. Apply strips across the wound being careful to approximate wound edges. Space strips evenly.
8. Allow strips to remain in place as recommended or until support is no longer afforded. Strips may be applied or reinforced, if necessary. If needed, apply a dry dressing and secure with tape.
9. Discard soiled supplies in appropriate containers.

AFTER CARE:
1. Document in patient's record:
   a. Patient's response to the procedure.
   b. Wound appearance.
   c. Response of the wound to the procedure.
2. Instruct patient/caregiver to:
   a. Keep area dry.
   b. Seek care to reapply strips at designated intervals, or sooner, if strips are loose.
   c. Report signs or symptoms of infection including pain, redness, swelling or discharge.

REFERENCES:
