


(Accepted for publication March 17, 1988.)

How to Make Tape Stick to Sandpaper

To the Editor—Although the literature on how to properly tape an endotracheal tube to a patient’s face is plentiful, we would like to add another report and a self-explanatory pertinent illustration on this subject.

Whenever a patient’s skin is either greasy, hairy, or otherwise so uneven that normal plastic or cloth tape will not adhere properly, we use the following technique.

Once endotracheal intubation has been performed and proper tube position is confirmed, two small rectangles (5 × 7 cm) of transparent dressing (Tegaderm™, 3M, St. Paul, Minnesota) are placed on the skin overlying the cheeks or the zygomatic arch, forming a “second skin.” The endotracheal tube can then be secured by the operator in the usual fashion, with the adhesive tape applied to the Tegaderm™. Contrary to regular tape, adhesion of the Tegaderm™ “second skin” does not deteriorate with time. Even after prolonged intubation, contact remains excellent and tube displacement is very unlikely to occur. For extubation, tape is easily removed together with the Tegaderm™.

We recommend this as an efficient and clean technique to make tape stick to any patient’s skin.

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(Accepted for publication March 30, 1988.)

A Method of Facilitating Intravenous Regional Brevitylum

To the Editor—Ford et al.1 recently described intravenous (iv) regional brevitylum for treatment of patients with reflex sympathetic dystrophy (RSD). We have used this technique several times with varying success. However, major problem in utilizing this technique is difficulty in establishing venous access due to the hypersensitivity and venoconstriction caused by the RSD. We describe an approach to facilitate iv access in these patients.

A young woman presented to our Pain Clinic with a 2-month history of RSD of the right foot following an industrial accident. An iv brevitylum blockade of her leg was accomplished only after great difficulty in establishing iv access. The patient had excellent pain relief for 36 h, and a repeat block was planned for the following week. Multiple attempts, including the use of nitroprusside ointment, to start an iv were unsuccessful. After appropriate consent was obtained and adequate prehydration given a 17-gauge Tuohy needle was inserted into the epidural space via the L3-4 interspace. Ten milliliters of .25% Marcaine was administered with the patient in the sitting position. The patient developed partial pain relief of her foot and minimal vasodilation. A 22-gauge angiocatheter was inserted and an iv brevitylum block was done resulting in complete analgesia.

In summary, establishing an iv in a limb afflicted with reflex sympathetic dystrophy is often difficult because of hypersensitivity and venoconstriction. Epidural sympathectomy block producing venodilation and some analgesia facilitates obtaining iv access for a regional block. A possible extension of this technique for an upper extremity would be sympatholysis via stellate ganglion blockade.

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