Q: What are the properties or differences in the non-adherent impregnated dressings?

A: Non-adherent impregnated dressing can be used to assist the penetration action when using a topical medication such as ointments or creams. These dressings are meant to be the first dressing in and around the wound bed, then covered with a more absorbent secondary dressing. Non-adherent impregnated dressings prevent adherence to the wound bed and decrease irritation to the growth of granulation tissue. Non-adherent impregnated dressings help to promote a moist environment necessary for wound healing and help prevent the secondary dressing from adhering.

The more popular dressings of this type are coated with a waxy substance or a petrolatum based ingredient. Vaseline Gauze, Adaptic, Xeroform, Xeroflo, Cuticerin and Oil Emulsion are examples of non-adherent impregnated dressings.

Petroleum Jelly Gauze i.e. Vaseline Gauze, is a gauze that is coated with white petrolatum. It is very cost effective, occlusive, and repels moisture. It is not absorptive and will need a secondary dressing. There may be some unraveled edges of the gauze when cut and this can leave debris in the wound with dressing changes. Wound drainage can pool under this dressing.

Xeroform Petrolatum gauze is a mesh gauze impregnated with a mixture of 3% Bismuth Tribromophenate and Petrolatum. The 3% bismuth Tribromophenate is added for its' deodorizing action. The petroleum based gauzes tend to cause the drainage to seep under and around the dressing and maceration can occur to the peri-wound skin.

Oil Emulsion dressing is a knitted cellulose fabric impregnated with an oil emulsion/petrolatum blend used as a primary dressing that goes in and around the wound but does not adhere to the wound bed. This dressing helps protect regenerating tissue and minimizes patient discomfort during dressing changes. The dressing is breathable and allows the wound drainage to pass through easily to the secondary dressing which is more absorbent, thus there is less pooling of wound fluids. The oil emulsion dressing can be cut to wound size without unraveling and shredding.

Practice Tip
When using these petroleum based dressings it is wise to change your gloves once you are finished handling it and placing it in the wound. You do not want to get any of the oily substance on the skin that your secondary dressing border or tape will need for adherence.

Advanced Tissue has a product list for non-adherent impregnated dressings on their website that is easily downloaded to your computer, smart phone, or tablet. Simply go to: http://www.advancedtissue.com/products