

How to change a simple wound dressing

Looking after your own wound can help improve your self-confidence and quality of life.

Following these steps carefully can help you lower the chance of your wound getting infected and promote healing.

Before you get started, gather what you need. This may include:

- A dressing pack which typically contains gauze, gloves, tray, apron, waste bag and a drape.
- Dressing/s.
- Wound cleansing solution to clean the wound and the surrounding skin

It is important that you keep the area where you are changing the wound dressing as clean as possible, and you wash your hands regularly throughout to help keep your wound clean.



Typical contents of kit

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Hand washing is an easy way to prevent infection.

Follow these steps to wash your hands:

- Wet your hands with clean, running water.
- Apply soap and lather well.
- Rub your hands hard for at least 20 seconds. Scrub all surfaces of the hands. This includes the backs of your hands, your wrists, between your fingers and under your fingernails, and the tips of your fingers.
- Rinse well.
- Dry your hands with a clean towel or kitchen roll.



Clean the surface where you will be placing your dressing pack with hot soapy water or surface cleaning wipes. Use an "S" shaped pattern to cover all surfaces, work from clean to dirty areas, top to bottom.

Wash your hands.



Remove the outer packaging of the dressing pack onto the clean surface. It is important that this has touched as little as possible to avoid any contamination.



Open the outer dressing pack, trying not to touch the inside part.



Open and drop the dressing/s onto the prepared dressing pack. Avoid touching the dressing and pack.

Wash your hands.



Remove the apron from the dressing pack. Open the apron and put it on.



Placing your hand inside the waste bag, use it as a glove to arrange the contents of the dressing pack.



Still using the waste bag as a glove, remove the old dressing and turn the bag inside out.



Open and add cleansing solution to the tray, ensuring the outer packaging does not touch the tray.

Wash your hands.



Put gloves on. Avoid touching the outside of the gloves.



Remove drape from the dressing from the dressing pack and place under the wound without touching anything to avoid contaminating the gloves.



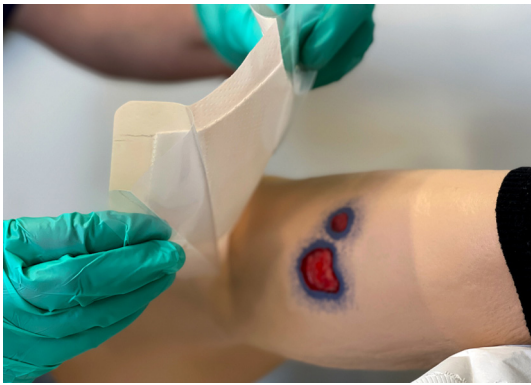
Wet the gauze with the cleansing solutions.

Starting from the centre of the wound, clean using circular motions with as much pressure as you can tolerate – taking care not to go over the same area twice. Cleanse from 1 inch past the edge of the wound.

Do not go from the outer edge of the wound back towards the centre as this could spread germs into the wound.

Discard the gauze into the waste bag.

Using new wet gauze, repeat the process for 10-20cm of the surrounding skin around the wound.



When applying the new dressing, take care not to touch the inside so that it stays clean.

If bandages are required on the lower limb, ensure you cleanse the rest of the limb and foot as shown by your health care provider.



Remove gloves and put in the waste bag.



Dispose of the waste in your general household waste bin.

Wash your hands.

If you have any concerns about your wound or the dressings, contact your health care provider.

If you would like this information in another format or language, please contact the Your Experience Team on freephone 0800 694 5530. Alternatively you can email wcnt.yourexperience@nhs.net

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