

Wound Care Advice Leaflet

Emergency contact details:



General overview

How can I help my wound to heal?

All wounds heal in the same way. First, new red tissue builds up in the bottom. Then new skin grows in from the edges and covers the red tissue.

Your wound will heal fastest if you create the best conditions for new tissue to grow. This means keeping your wound clean, warm and moist.

Here's what you should do:

- **Wash your hands** – the most important thing you and your caregivers can do to prevent infection is wash your hands. You should use soap and water, and wash before and after touching your wound.
- **Keep a clean dressing on your wound** – dressings keep out germs and protect the wound from injury. They also help absorb fluid that drains from the wound and could damage the skin around it.
- **Be careful** – protect the wound from trauma or injury. Don't let anything touch it or bump it.
- **Eat healthily** – eating the right foods gives your body the building blocks it needs to heal.

Signs of wound infection

Wound infections are always a possibility after an accident/trauma/surgery. Infection can happen at any time.

Please be aware of any of the following symptoms:

- An increase in body temperature.
- Increased redness, pain or swelling.
- An unpleasant smell.
- Heat around the wound.
- A thick yellowy discharge – however, it is normal for there to be a clear straw coloured fluid weeping from the wound in the first 36 hours.
- Feeling generally unwell.

These indicate that the wound may be infected and needs treating with antibiotics.

Changing your dressing

Keeping a clean dressing on your wound will help it heal. The nursing staff will talk you through the step by step guide and will show you how to change your dressings.

You will be provided with a prescription for dressings and packs containing gloves, an apron and a bag for disposal.

It is essential that you ensure a high standard of cleanliness at all dressing changes to reduce the risk of infection.



Step-by-step guide

Preparation

Clean your work area and gather your supplies - dressing pack, water/saline and dressings.

1. Wash your hands thoroughly with warm soapy water and dry them well.



2. Open the dressing pack fully onto a table to create a sterile surface and take out the disposal bag - it is important that this area is touched as little as possible.



3. Remove the old dirty dressing and place in the bag ready for disposal.



4. Wash your hands again. Put the apron on if you are not the patient.

5. Open all dressings required and drop them onto the sterile area.



Step-by-step guide, continued



6. Put the gloves on - avoid touching the outside of the gloves as much as possible.

7. Wet the gauze pad with water or saline. Gently clean the wound.

Start at the centre of the wound. Dab in circles out to 1 inch past the edge of the wound. Don't wipe or rub too hard as this could damage the newly healing tissue.

Do not go from the outer edges of the wound back toward the centre. This could spread germs into the wound.



8. Apply the dressings to the wound - be careful to avoid touching the wound.
9. Dispose of the waste disposal bag as advised by the Nursing Staff and then wash your hands.

Don't forget - if you have any questions or concerns, please contact your District Nurse or healthcare professional.

