



Information for You from Your Health Care Team

WOUND CARE

Wet-to-dry dressings

What is a wound?

A wound is an injury that tears, scrapes, or cuts the skin open. “Wound care” means what you do to care for your wound to help it heal and to stop infection.

There are many types of wounds.

- Abrasions are scrapes in the skin. An abrasion happens when the outer layer of the skin is rubbed or scraped off.
- Lacerations are cuts in the skin.
- Puncture wounds are holes that are made by round, sharp objects such as needles or nails.
- An incision is a cut from surgery or medical procedure.

Why use a wet-to-dry dressing?

A wet-to-dry bandage is used if your wound is infected or it is not stitched closed. Wet bandages are put inside the wound and dry bandages are put on top. When the wet bandage dries, it sticks to the stuff in the wound. When you pull the now dry bandage off, it cleans the wound out. This can help some wounds heal faster. Your caregiver will tell you how often to change the dressing. Your caregiver will tell you when you can shower or get the wound wet.

Steps for changing a wet-to-dry dressing.

1. Gather all the supplies you will need:
 - new bandages
 - medical tape
 - solution for wet dressing (Your caregiver will tell you what solution to use.)
 - a plastic trash bag for the dirty bandages.
 - a plastic sheet, towel or pad to protect the area where you are changing the bandage.
 - cotton swabs such as Q-tips.
 - gloves if your caregiver tells you to use them.
2. Wash your hands.
3. Put the plastic sheet, towel or pad under the part of your body where the wound is to keep the bed or furniture dry
4. Remove the old dressing. Look at the old dressing and see if there is any drainage and what the drainage looks like. Throw the old dressing in the plastic garbage bag.
5. Wash your hands again. Put the gloves on if your caregiver told you to use them.
6. Look at the wound for any signs of infection.
7. Clean the area with the solution prescribed.
8. Wet the new bandage with the solution that your caregiver ordered.
9. Fluff the wet dressing to make it easier to pack in the wound
10. Put the wet dressing in the wound. Use the cotton swabs to push the dressing into the corners of the wound. **Do not pack the dressing too tightly in the wound.**

11. Put a dry bandage over the wound and tape the dry bandage in place.

12. Remember to wash your hands when you are all finished.

Call your doctor if you have any of the following signs of infection, or if your wound starts to bleed.

- Swelling in the area
- Redness in the area
- New drainage from the area
- A change in the color of the drainage from the area.
- A bad smell from the area or on the bandages.
- Red streaking around the area.
- Skin around area hot to touch.
- An increase in your temperature
- More pain or soreness in the area.