

## Moist Dressing Changes

Change your dressing every \_\_\_\_\_.

### What supplies do I need?

- Tape
- Gauze without cotton filling
- Stretch gauze (Kerlix® or Kling®)
- Scissors
- Disposable gloves
- Bag for dirty dressing
- Prescribed cleaning solution
- Prescribed wound medication

### How do I change my dressing?

#### Getting ready:

Gather the supplies and put them on a clean surface.

Wash your hands with soap and water. If someone else is doing this, tell them to wash their hands and put on gloves.



#### Taking off the old dressing:

1. Gently remove the dressing.
2. Put the dressing into the bag.
3. Wash hands with soap and water.

Wash  
Hands

#### Washing the wound:

1. When you bathe or take a shower, wash both your hands and your wound with antibacterial soap (one example is Dial) and water.
2. When you are done, rinse the wound with sterile saline or sterile water

#### Scrubbing the wound:

1. Wet a piece of gauze with sterile water or saline.
2. Scrub the wound to remove any loose bits of tissue. Do not be afraid to scrub the wound **hard**. Healthy tissue will not come off. Only infected and dying tissue will come off, and this is good for healing.
3. If you have a lot of pain, take a pain medication 30-60 minutes before to scrubbing your wound, so that your pain is better controlled.



#### Putting on a new dressing:

1. Open the gauze, and the stretch gauze if needed.
2. Put on gloves.
3. Cover the wound in the medicated cream that your doctor prescribed. Cover **only** the wound with a thin layer of cream. To do this, you may use gauze or a tongue depressor. Do **not** put it on the skin around the wound. If your wound has pockets under the skin, fill all these pockets with medication and gauze.

4. Cover the wound with clean dry gauze. Use stretch gauze if the wound is on an arm or leg. You may also use tape to keep the dressing in place.
5. Wash your hands with soap and water.

### What else do I need to know?

Do not take a tub bath until your doctor says you may do so.

### Call the doctor or go to the emergency room if you have:

- New or increased drainage from the wound
- Foul odor from the wound
- Temperature higher than 101° F.
- Redness or swelling of, or around, the wound.
- New or increased pain.
- Bleeding that will not stop.



## Some Questions and Answers about Wound Care

### Is it healthy for the wound to 'get air'?

**No.** A wound heals when the cells in nearby healthy tissue divide and grow over the wound. Cells need a moist place so they can divide and grow. It is important to keep your wound covered.

### Is it bad for the wound to get wet?

**No.** Washing the wound keeps it clean.

### Is drainage normal?

**Usually not.** If you have any change or increase in drainage, **call your doctor.** This is very important because drainage can be a sign of infection.

### Will the wound bleed when I clean it?

**Sometimes.** A wound will bleed when you clean it. If the wound is bleeding, put gauze on it and hold pressure as hard as you can for at least 5 minutes. If you are bleeding enough to soak through the gauze or if the bleeding does not stop, **call your doctor or come to the emergency room.**

### Will bits of skin or tissue come off when I clean?

**Yes.** Any bits of tissue that come off are unhealthy or dead tissue. When you remove this tissue, it helps the wound to heal. Healthy tissue will **not** come off when you clean the wound

### Should I use topical antibiotics that are sold in pharmacies, such as

**Bacitracin® or Neosporin®?**

**No.** Use **only** the medications that your doctor gives you. If you have questions or concerns, discuss them with your doctor **before** making any changes.

**Should I use an antiseptic cream or liquid at home?**

**No, unless your doctor orders them.** Antiseptic creams, lotions, and liquids you have at home, such as hydrogen peroxide, acetic acid, and iodine can actually **hurt** healthy, growing cells and keep your wound from healing.

**Should I use over-the-counter steroid or cortisone creams?**

**No, unless your doctor orders them.** Steroid creams are harmful for wound healing and for fungal rashes. A fungal rash may look better at first, but it will be worse than ever when the cream is stopped.

**What should I do to keep the skin around the wound healthy?**

You should shower or wash the skin around your wound when you clean the wound. Use a washcloth to gently clean off any dead skin. You can then moisturize with a non-medicated, non-perfumed lotion or cream. Be careful that this does not go into your wound.

If you have any type of rash or irritation around your wound, tell your doctor.

**What do I do if I have a question?**

If you are confused or have a question about your dressing, please call us at 212.932.4325, at any time. You can also find information at our website: [www.ColumbiaWoundHealing.org](http://www.ColumbiaWoundHealing.org).

This information is brief and general. It should not be the only source of your information on this health care topic. It is not to be used or relied on for diagnosis or treatment. It does not take the place of instructions from your doctor. Talk to your health care providers before making a health care decision.