How to Change Your Dressing

HOME CARE

Follow your doctor's instructions for how often to change the dressing. You will be told to change your dressing either:

- Once a day.
- 2 times a day.
- 3 times a day.

WHAT TO DO BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Wash your hands with soap and water. Then dry your hands with a clean towel.
- Get all your supplies together. Things you will need include:
  - Normal saline
  - Bandage (*Kling*)
  - Antibiotic ointment
  - Tape
  - Gloves
  - ABD pads
  - Gauze
  - Plastic bags
  - Fine mesh gauze
- If you need pain medicine before your dressing change, take it 30 minutes before you start the dressing change.
- Take your shower before you do the first dressing change of the day.

FOLLOW THESE STEPS TO CHANGE THE DRESSING

- Take off the old dressing. Put it in a plastic bag. Wash your hands. If someone helps you take off your old dressing, they should also wash their hands.
- Open the supplies in front of you:
  - Take the cap off the saline if you are using saline.
  - Open the gauze. Keep it lying on the inside of the package.
- Put on your gloves.
- Clean your wound as you were shown by your doctor.
- If you have been told to keep your wound dry, follow those instructions. Your doctor will tell you to do one or more of the following:
  - Pick up the gauze. With the other hand, pour the saline over the gauze. Squeeze out the extra saline.
  - Put antibiotic ointment or other medicine on your wound if you have been told to do so.
  - Put saline soaked gauze only in your wound, not on the skin around it.
  - Pack your wound loosely, as your doctor taught you.
  - Put dry gauze on your wound.
  - Put ABD pads over the dry gauze if your dressings soak through.
- Take your gloves off. Put them in the plastic bag with the old dressing.
- Tape the dressing in place so it will not fall off. Do not wrap the tape completely around your arm or leg.
- Wrap the dressing with Kling if you have been told to do so.
- Tie the plastic bag shut and put it in the trash. Then wash your hands again.
- Keep this dressing clean and dry until your next dressing change.

GET HELP IF:

- The skin around your wound has a red rash that itches and burns.
- You see black or yellow flesh in your wound that was not there before.
- You feel sick to your stomach (*nausea*), throw up, and feel very tired.
- You have a fever of 100.5°F (38.1°C) or higher.

GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF:

- Your wound looks red.
- Your wound feels more tender or sore.
- You see green or yellow liquid (*pus*) in the wound.
- The wound has a bad smell.
- You have a fever of 102°F (38.9°C) or higher.

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