

## **Clean Dressing Change Technique** by Kris Dalseg MS PT CWS CLT

There are no sterile settings in the nursing home, acute care facility, or patient's home. The only environment that should be sterile is the operating room. We aspire to perform a clean technique.

The following is a list of suggestions to follow when changing a patient's dressing. The first thing that you should always do is wash your hands. Gather all supplies and equipment. Explain to your patient (or family member) the procedure about to be performed. Check and see if they are experiencing any pain. If so, make sure that they receive their pain medication (as ordered by their physician) prior to the treatment.

1. Set up a clean area to work in. In a hospital, or long term care facility, the overbed table should work nicely. (At home, set up a clean area to place your supplies). Move any objects off of the table. Clean the area with a sanitizer. Place a clean layer over the table (this is usually a sheet of wax paper; or at home perhaps a clean towel.)
2. Place your clean supplies on the towel (or wax paper). Open the packages, but do not remove the dressings. Remember, the inside of the package is sterile.
3. If you are in a facility, ensure the patient's privacy, pull the curtains and close the door. Assist the patient to a comfortable position, so that only the wound site is exposed.
4. Now, remove your gloves & wash your hands again! Put new gloves on.
5. Gently remove the old dressing & dispose of it properly. Remove your gloves (again!) & wash your hands. Put on a new pair of gloves.
6. Cleanse the wound gently with normal saline; be sure to address any areas of tunneling or undermining. Pat the area dry with gauze (start in the center of the wound, with a circular motion, go outward). If the necessary to clean the wound completely, use another clean gauze and repeat.
7. Pay special attention to the wound edges. Gentle rub the edges with gauze (moisturized with normal saline). Apply a moisture barrier (if ordered by physician) to the wound edges (going outward from the wound). This will reduce maceration and protect skin from adhesives.
8. If you are working in a healthcare facility: measure the site per facility schedule. Then apply the ordered dressing, secure as per order.
9. Change the dressing as per ordered frequency. Make sure that you date and initial your dressing. Assist the patient to a comfortable position. Return your equipment to a designated area.
10. Discard the bag containing the dressing in an appropriate waste container. Remove gloves and wash hands.
11. Assess your patient for pain during and after treatment.

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