



Wound Care

Taking proper care of your wound will help it heal. Your health care provider may show you how to clean and dress the wound. He or she will also explain how to tell if the wound is healing normally. Here are the basic steps:

Wash Your Hands

- Use liquid soap and lather for 2 minutes. Scrub between your fingers and under your nails.
- Rinse with warm water, keeping your fingers pointing down.
- Use a paper towel to dry your hands and to turn off the faucet.

Remove the Used Dressing

- Set up your supplies.
- Put on disposable gloves if you're dressing a wound for someone else or your wound is infected.
- Gently take off the old dressing. If you have a drain or tube in the wound, be careful not to pull on it.
- Loosen the tape by pulling gently toward the wound.
- Remove the dressing 1 layer at a time and put it in a plastic bag.
- Remove your gloves.

Inspect and Dress the Wound

- Each time you change the dressing, inspect the wound carefully to be sure it's healing normally.
- Wash your hands again. Put on a new pair of gloves.
- Clean and dress the wound as directed by your doctor or nurse. If you have a drain or tube, be careful not to pull on it.
- Put all supplies in a plastic bag; seal the bag and put it in the trash.
- Be sure to wash your hands again.

Call your health care provider if you see any of the following signs of a problem:

- Bleeding that soaks the dressing
- Pink fluid weeping from the wound
- Increased drainage or drainage that is yellow, yellow-green, or foul-smelling
- Increased swelling or pain, or redness or swelling in the skin around the wound
- A change in the color of the wound, or if streaks develop
- An increase in the size of the wound
- A fever over 101°F (38.3°C), increased fatigue, or a loss of appetite.