

PROCEDURE

ORIGINAL DATE: 09/03

REVIEWED DATE: 06/05

SUBJECT: ALGINATE DRESSINGS

PURPOSE:

1. To absorb wound exudate.
2. To fill the wound.
3. Silver impregnated alginates provide antimicrobial effect.

Considerations

Alginate dressings consist of nonwoven pads or ropes/ribbons that, upon exposure to wound exudate will expand and form a gel. They are indicated for moderate to highly exudating wounds. Alginate dressings can be cut to fit the size of the wound. If the dressing is not completely saturated upon removal, remoistening may be necessary to prevent injury to healthy tissue.

Supplies/Equipment

Clean gloves, wound cleansing or irrigation supplies; alginate dressing which is large enough to cover and/or lightly pack the wound as necessary; clean scissors to be used if the dressing needs to be cut to fit a particular area; plastic bags for disposal of old dressing; clean towel to dry the skin after cleansing.

Procedure

1. Follow clean technique procedure for assessment and treatment of the patient including dressing change.
2. Carefully remove and discard old dressing. After hand washing, don appropriate personal protective equipment.
3. Cleanse or irrigate the wound according to the physician's order. If using silver impregnated alginate, use sterile water to cleanse or irrigate.
4. Dry the surrounding skin and assess the wound.
5. Remove the dressing by irrigating with ordered wound cleanser and apply assuring that the wound bed is covered and any areas of tunneling and/or undermining are lightly packed.
6. Cover the alginate with an appropriate secondary dressing.
7. Discard all disposable materials in the plastic bag, assure that it is discarded in a second plastic bag according to HHVNA policy.
8. Clean reusable materials.
9. Document findings and update plan of care as necessary.
10. Follow-up: Usual dressing change frequency is 1-3 times per week or when leakage of exudate occurs, according to physicians order. If using a silver impregnated alginate, dressing changes should occur 3 times/week or more frequently as exudate dictates.

Reference(s):

1. Mölnlyche Health Care Reference Manual, Mölnlyche Health Care, Inc., Newton PA, February, 2003
2. Product Package Insert, Acticoat Absorbent, Smith and Nephew, Inc.
3. Mölnlyche Health Care Wound Dressing Selection Guide, Mölnlyche Health Care, Inc., Newton, PA, Feb, 2002