

PROCEDURE

ORIGINAL DATE: 09/02

REVISED DATE: 02/08

SUBJECT: SILVER NITRATE ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURE TO TREAT HYPERGRANULATION IN WOUNDS

PURPOSE: To describe the process used by clinicians to administer silver nitrate topically to rid wound(s) of hypergranulation tissue, which impedes wound healing and ultimate wound closure.

Considerations

Hypergranulation tissue is granulation tissue that has grown above or over the edges of a wound. It must be removed to allow the wound to proceed through the normal wound healing process. Silver nitrate can be used to reduce this type of tissue. In order to administer silver nitrate to treat hypergranulation, a physician's order must be obtained indicating frequency and duration of treatment. Treatment should be discontinued when the hypergranulation is resolved and the granulation tissue is within the wound edges. Although rare, this treatment may cause electrolyte imbalance if used over long periods of time. Therefore, it is important to consider the length of time a patient is treated with silver nitrate when evaluating progress/desired results. If desired results do not occur in a timely manner, the physician must be consulted for consideration of surgical/sharp wound debridement or an alternate method of ridding the wound of hypergranulation tissue.

Procedure

Using Standard Precautions and Clean Technique:

1. Cleanse the wound with normal saline or according to MD order.
2. Identify area (s) of hypergranulation tissue to be treated.
3. Roll the tip of the silver nitrate stick along hypergranulation tissue until it turns brown.
4. Cover with appropriate dressing as ordered by MD.
5. Discard silver nitrate stick according to agency guidelines.
6. Evaluate effectiveness of silver nitrate treatment at next dressing change and repeat as indicated as ordered by MD.
7. If silver nitrate is not removing hypergranulation tissue efficiently, contact MD to consider other options for attaining a clean wound bed that is free of hypergranulation tissue.

Approved Policy Committee: 02/12/08