

# HHF - PROCEDURE

ORIGINAL DATE: 06/07

Revised Date:

**SUBJECT: WOUND CARE - PACKING**

**PURPOSE:** To outline procedures to be followed by clinical staff in the course of packing a wound. The purposes of packing a wound are to keep it open, to apply continuous medication and/or to allow it to heal from the inside out.

## Considerations:

1. Avoid using cotton lined gauze sponges since the fibers can adhere to the wound's surface.
2. Packing should be done gently; over packing can impair circulation and cause pain.
3. Packing is done as part of a dressing change; follow the ordered dressing procedure.
4. Moist packing facilitates wound healing and should be used whenever possible.

## Equipment:

Q-Tips	Protective eye wear (optional)
Dressing (as needed)	Protective bed pad
Non-cotton lined gauze sponges, rolled gauze, packing strips	Solution, such as normal saline, and/or medication
Cotton mesh gauze (optional)	Skin protectant
Gloves	Montgomery straps (optional)
Apron or gown (optional)	Impervious trash bag
Measuring TAPE to measure wounds & the length of measurable packing materials (Measure BEFORE PACKING & UPON REMOVAL)	

## Procedure:

1. Adhere to Standard Precautions.
2. Review the physician's orders.
3. Explain the procedure to the patient.
5. Using gloves, remove the old dressing. Normal saline may be necessary to loosen the old dressing. Remove tape by pushing skin away from tape.
6. Count and measure all removed materials at this time
7. Discard soiled supplies according to agency policy.

8. Cleanse the wound appropriately per physician's orders.
9. Measure and document the length, width and depth of the wound at least every 7 days.
10. Observe for:
  - a. Changes in wound size including length, width, and depth.
  - b. Drainage characteristics including type, amount, color, odor percent slough and percent granulation tissue.
  - c. Evidence of wound healing or deterioration.
  - d. Symptoms of infection including redness, swelling, pain, discharge, or increased temperature.
  - e. Development of undermining or a sinus tract that may require packing.
10. If ordered, apply the prescribed topical medication or solution to the packing material, e.g., normal saline solution.
11. Don clean gloves.
12. Using forceps or a Q-tip gently pack the wound with fluffed, non-cotton lined gauze or other dressing material.
13. Make note of amount of packing material used for later documentation.
14. If packing the wound for mechanical debridement:
  - a. Cotton mesh gauze is a common choice because it has large interstices that readily retain moisture and conform to the wound.
  - b. Fluff the gauze before packing into the wound to maximize surface area.
  - c. Make sure all the wound surfaces are covered and kept moist so that complete debridement can take place.
  - d. Pack the wound only until wound surfaces and edges are covered to prevent maceration of surrounding tissue.
15. Apply a new dressing to absorb drainage until the next scheduled change. Absorbent dressing may be used for outer layers of the dressing, if additional absorbency is needed.
16. Apply skin protectant to areas to be covered by tape. Allow to dry.
17. Secure the dressing with tape. If dressing changes are frequent, Montgomery straps may be used to secure the wound dressing.
18. Discard soiled supplies according to agency policy.
19. Clean reusable instruments before leaving the home, according to agency policy.

### **After Care:**

1. Document in the patient's record:
  - a. The procedure performed.
  - b. The packing used, including:
    - type
    - length (if strip or rope form) or
    - number of items used (i.e. one piece of white VAC foam and one piece of black VAC foam, two pieces of 4X4 gauze, etc.).
  - f. Type and amount of packing removed from the wound.
  - b. The patient's response to the procedure.

- c. The patient's temperature and vital signs.
  - d. Wound observations noted in #8 of procedure.
  - e. The response of the wound to the prescribed treatment.
2. Instruct the patient/caregiver in care of the wound, including:
- a. Reporting any changes in pain, drainage, temperature, or other signs and symptoms of infection.
  - b. Techniques to change or reinforce dressings. It is not routine to teach lay people to pack wounds.
  - c. Diet to promote healing.
  - d. Medications/disease processes that may be impeding healing.
  - e. Activities permitted.

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Approved Policy Committee: 06/12/07