

WOUND VACUUM ASSISTED CLOSURE

ALGORITHM. Dressing Change Steps

Step 1: Irrigate/cleanse the wound with normal saline. If tunneling present: use 30cc syringe to irrigate tunnel and **Inclusion Criteria:** undermining area. Dry wound. Pts w/ chronic, acute, traumatic, subacute and dehisced wounds, partial-thickness burns, Step 2: Assess wound dimensions and pathology, including the presence of ulcers, flaps and grafts undermining or tunnels. Take a picture of wound if necessary. **Exclusion Criteria:** *Measurement should always be documented: length x width x depth Untreated osteomyelitis, unexplored non-enteric fistulas, or cancer in wound Step 3: Apply Cavilon No String Barrier Film to healthy skin for protection, including area where bridge will be. Let all areas dry before placing drape. Step 4: Choose appropriate foam dressing V.A.C. WhiteFoam dressing V.A.C. GranuFoam (Black) dressing Indicated: for use in tunnels, undermining, and Indicated: wounds without tunnels, over exposed bone, tendon or muscle. undermining, and/or exposed bone *white polyvinyl alcohol foam is dense, openpore foam with a higher tensile strength

Step 5: Cut all V.A.C [®] foam dressings with sterile scissors to dimensions that will allow for the foam to be placed gently into the wound without over-lapping onto intact skin. *If possible, use one piece of foam to fill wound and create bridge.

Step 6: Cut V.A.C.® Drape to fit over entire wound/periwound. Think of the "1, 2 then Blue" technique for placing the drape. Once the drape is covering the entire wound, cut out an area, exposing the wound, where the sponge will be placed. *Goal is to keep periwound protected.

Step 7: Gently place V.A.C.® foam into wound cavity, ensuring contact with all wound surfaces and without overlapping onto intact skin. *If white foam is used for undermining/tunneling, intertwine with black foam for easy removal and sponge-to-sponge contact to maintain thorough suction.

Step 8: If a bridge is indicated, place one end of the **V.A.C.**® **GranuFoam** over wound site and position the other end of the bridge where the T.R.A.C. Pad will be placed. Ensure that there is sponge- to-sponge contact throughout the entire system and that Wound V.A.C. ® Drape is protecting the healthy skin below the bridge.

Step 9: Apply another V.A.C.® Drape to cover entire system including the bridge. **DO NOT** stretch drape when applying as this will produce a shearing effect.

Step 10: Pinch drape where T.R.A.C. Pad will be placed and cut a 2.5 cm hole (quarter-size or bigger) through the drape. Hole should be large enough to allow for removal of fluid and/or exudate. It is not necessary to cut into the foam.

Step 11: Turn on V.A.C.® and apply another layer of Cavilon No Sting Barrier Film to seal the system/prevent leaks.

CLINICAL PATHWAY



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Algorithm. Dressing Change Steps

Target Population

Background | Definitions

Initial Evaluation - N/A

Clinical Management | Troubleshooting

Laboratory Studies | Imaging

Therapeutics - N/A

Discharge

References

Clinical Improvement Team

TARGET POPULATION

Inclusion Criteria

- Patients with chronic, acute, traumatic, subacute, and dehisced wounds
- Patients with partial-thickness burns, ulcers, flaps, and grafts

Exclusion Criteria

- Patients with untreated osteomyelitis
- Patients with unexplored non-enteric fistulas
- Patients with cancer in wound

BACKGROUND | DEFINITIONS

Negative Pressure Wound Therapy (NPWT) is a provider prescribed wound therapy used for closure of large often deep wounds or for skin/muscle flaps and grafts. They are intended to create an environment that promotes wound healing by secondary or tertiary (delayed primary) intention by preparing the wound bed for closure, reducing edema, promoting granulation tissue formation and perfusion, and by removing exudate and infectious material. They are indicated for patients with chronic, acute, traumatic, subacute and dehisced wounds, partial-thickness burns, ulcers (such as diabetic, pressure or venous insufficiency), flaps and grafts. A Provider order is required to initiate the V.A.C.® wound therapy. The order should address frequency of dressing changes as well as suction pressure setting. The default setting is 125mmHg on a continuous suction, but settings can be individualized to the patient's specific needs. Dressings should be changed every 72 hours, with frequency adjusted by the Provider as appropriate. Dressings can be changed by the Provider, CWOCN, or trained Provider designee.

- Negative Pressure Wound Therapy (NPWT)
 - o Also called the Wound VAC. Wound V.A.C.® is a proprietary name for the KCI V.A.C.® Therapy System.
- The V.A.C.[©] Therapy System
 - An Advanced Wound Therapy System consisting of four parts:
 - The V.A.C.® Therapy unit that delivers negative pressure
 - The sterile plastic tubing which connects the therapy unit to the dressing

CLINICAL PATHWAY



- o A special foam dressings either V.A.C.® GranuFoam™(Black foam) or the V.A.C.® WhiteFoam
- A clear drape with adhesive backing called V.A.C.® Drape that covers the foam dressing
- V.A.C. Black Granufoam Dressing
 - Polyurenthane foam dressing with reticulated pores to help evenly distribute negative pressure across the wound bed, assisting in tissue granulation formation in wounds and aiding wound contraction. It is hydrophobic (moisture repelling), which enhances exudate removal.
- V.A.C. White Foam Dressing

Polyvinyl alcohol infused foam that is a dense, open pore foam with a higher tensile strength for use in tunnels and undermining. It is hydrophilic (moisture retaining) and is packaged pre-moistened with sterile water. Its characteristics help to reduce the likelihood of adherence to the wound base. This foam can be used over fresh split thickness skin grafts, to protect exposed bone, tendon, or muscle, for packing of tracks or tunnels, and in situations where hyper granulation responses are likely.

CLINICAL MANAGEMENT

Pressure Setting:

- The default setting is 125mmHg on a continuous suction, but settings can be individualized to the patient's specific needs.
- Consider titrating the V.A.C. pressure setting up by 25mmHg increments for excessive drainage, large wound volume, or V.A.C. white foam dressing in the wound or in tunneled areas.
- Consider titrating the V.A.C. pressure setting down by 25mmHg increments for infants or young age, compromised nutrition, risk of excessive bleeding, circulatory compromise, hyper granulation, excessive pain or discomfort, or periwound or wound bed ecchymosis.

Dressing Change Frequency:

- Dressings should be changed every 72 hours, with frequency adjusted by the Provider as appropriate. The Provider, Provider designee, or CWOCN changes the NPWT dressing at the ordered frequency.
 - Once an order has been placed for Wound V.A.C. therapy, supplies should be ordered for wound V.A.C. dressing changes.
 - The NPWT machine (Wound V.A.C.®) is obtained from Sterile Processing.
 - The canister and the foam dressing kits are obtained from Central Supply. There are three sizes of foam
 dressing kits, small, medium and large. White foam is also available.
 - **NOTE**: If the system is malfunctioning for more than two hours, the RN or Provider should remove the current V.A.C.® dressing and apply moistened gauze to the wound bed and cover with a Mepilex dressing until a Provider or member of the Wound team can assess the wound and reapply the V.A.C.® system.

Dressing Change Steps: See Algorithm

TROUBLESHOOTING

Alarming "MALFUNCTION":

- Confirm the unit is plugged into the wall and has power.
- Restart the unit to see if the problem is with the unit itself.
- If unit is plugged in and restarted and still alarming, think possible leak (see Leak trouble shooting).

Alarming "LEAK ALARM":

• Check to make sure all connections are secure.

CLINICAL PATHWAY



- Press down on the sponge in all areas to identify leak.
- Use Stethoscope or place your ear near the dressing to listen for leak. An air leak will make a whistling sound.
- To secure a leak, apply additional draping/Cavilon No Sting Barrier Film to secure areas where leak is heard.
- Use a barrier ring in troubling areas (i.e., between rectum and wound) to promote a better seal.

Alarming "LOW PRESSURE ALERT":

- Ensure both clamps on the dressing and canister tubing are open.
- Ensure that tubing is not kinked or blocked in any way.
- If blockage is noted within tubing, change tubing or flush tubing with 10cc sterile saline to remove blockage.
- If the low pressure alert remains after completing steps above, lowering the therapy unit and tubing to be level with or below the wound site may resolve this alert.

LABORATORY STUDIES | IMAGING

Consider weekly pre-albumin levels to evaluate for optimal nutrition for healing.

DISCHARGE

- If a patient is being discharged with NPWT, home wound vac supplies must be ordered prior to discharge. Provider or designee should work with the Case Manager to fill out appropriate paperwork and ensure dressing supplies are ordered through a home company. Home supplies and the home wound vac machine (KCI Activac) are delivered to the patient's hospital room by the company.
- A plan for dressing changes after discharge should be arranged prior to discharge from the hospital. This can include a home nursing company or scheduled dressing changes in clinic.
- The ordering service is responsible for changing the hospital vac to the home vac prior to discharge and
 educating the family on troubleshooting the vac at home. This can also be done by the WOCN team upon
 request.



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Clinical Care Guidelines & Measures Review Committee - September 27, 2016

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COLORADO SPRINGS REVIEW BY	Michael DiStefano, MD Chief Medical Officer, Colorado Springs
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REVIEW | REVISION SCHEDULE

Scheduled for full review on September 27, 2020

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