Vacuum Assisted Closure (VAC) Dressing

This type of dressing uses negative pressure to pull the edges of the wound toward the center. The VAC dressing consists of 3 parts:

- Special sponge with a tube attached
- Pump with a collection canister
- Clear drape that seals over the wound

The pump pulls air through the sponge to remove drainage while pulling the tissues to help heal large wounds. The drainage is collected in a canister on the pump.

When the pump is first turned on, you may feel a slight pulling at the wound site. The foam sponge will wrinkle as the air is pulled out of the wound. You need to have the pump on for the treatment to work.

How long you need to use the VAC dressing depends on:

- The type and size of your wound
- Your body's ability to heal

Often the VAC dressing is used to heal a wound to the point where it can be closed in surgery, or before a skin flap or graft is done. You may have another dressing such as Aquacel Ag, Restore, Adaptic or Acticoat placed on the wound with the VAC dressing placed over top.
The VAC pump needs to be on for at least 22 hours each day to get the best results from the treatment. You can turn the pump off for going to the bathroom or during your shower.

Change your dressing as your doctor orders. This may be every day or as long as every 5 days.

Your schedule is ________________________________.

Steps to Follow

1. Wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 15 seconds. Rinse and towel dry.

2. Clean your workspace. Wet two paper towels with water. Put soap on one towel and use it to wash off the counter or table. Use the second damp towel to rinse. Dry with another clean paper towel.

3. Set your supplies on your workspace.
   - Non sterile gloves
   - Plastic trash bag
   - Warm water or soap for cleaning your wound
   - Washcloth and towel
   - Gauze pads if needed to clean or dry the wound
   - Foam sponge dressing
   - Clear drape
   - Clean scissors to cut drape and foam to size

4. Put on non-sterile gloves. Remove the old dressing.

5. Place the dressings in the plastic trash bag. Remove the gloves and place them in the trash bag.

6. Wash your hands again for at least 15 seconds.

7. Put on a clean pair of gloves.

8. Gently clean your wound with soap and water using gauze pads or washcloth. If you doctor ordered cleaning solution, use that to clean your wound.
9. Check your wounds for signs of infection. Call your doctor or nurse if you find:
   - Skin around the wound is more red, swollen, or feels hot
   - Wound smells bad
   - Pus drainage
   - Temperature above 101 degrees F.

10. Open the new foam sponge dressing. Cut it to size. As your wound heals, you will need to cut the foam smaller. Place it in the wound.

11. Connect the tubing to the sponge dressing.

12. Connect the tubing to the pump unit.

13. Open the drape package. Cut the drape to the size needed.

14. Place the drape over the wound site. Smooth the drape as you stick it around the wound to prevent any wrinkle that may leak. Be sure to form the drape around the tubing to seal it also.

15. Open the clamp on the tubing.

16. Turn on the VAC pump. Listen and watch for leaks. Use pieces from what you cut off the drape to seal any leaks around the edges of the drape or the tubing.

17. Remove your gloves and throw them in the plastic trash bag.

18. Put your supplies away.

19. Wash your hands again with soap and water.

**About the VAC Pump**

The pump unit has alarms that will sound for problems:

- Canister is full. This will sound if the canister is full or if the unit was tilted to cause the filter in the canister to get wet. If this happens, you need to replace the canister.

- Check for leaks. Listen for a whistle where the air is leaking into the drape. Repair any leaks with pieces from the drape you cut away.
• Battery is low. Be sure to keep the pump unit plugged into the wall.

• Unit is tilted. This will sound if the unit is tipped more than 45 degrees. Set the system upright on a flat surface.

Check with your equipment supplier if there are other alarms you need to know about for your pump.

Check the VAC Often

• Be sure the pump is on.

• Check that it says, "therapy on".

• Be sure the clamps are open and the tubing is not twisted or kinked.

Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.