Stomach or Gastrostomy Tube Care: Wafer Dressing and Skin Care

A wafer dressing helps protect your skin and support your tube. It is made of material that is sticky on one side, so that it will stay on the skin. Skin care around the tube must be done every other day, however, the dressing only needs to be changed every 5 days.

Skin care around the gastrostomy tube:
- Do skin care every other day.
- Supplies:
  - Umbilical clamp
  - Cotton swabs, such as Q-tips
  - Soap and water
  - Stoma adhesive paste

Steps to follow:
1. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 15 seconds. Rinse and dry with a clean towel.
2. Lift the disc:
   - Take the pointed end of an umbilical clamp
   - Gently put it under the outside rim of the disc
   - Guide it around the disc
   - Lift the disc and nipple off the skin so you can see the area around the tube
3. Clean the skin around the tube with a cotton swab dipped in soap and water. Rinse with clean tap water and dry thoroughly with new cotton swab.
4. Put a small amount of stoma adhesive paste on your skin at the base of the tube.
5. Put the nipple and disc back in position.
Changing the wafer dressing:

- You will need to change the wafer dressing every 5 days. Change it more often if it is loose or soiled, or if there is drainage around the site.

- **Supplies:**
  - Plastic bag
  - Soap, water, clean towel
  - Cotton swabs, such as Q-tips
  - Clean wash clothes
  - Stoma adhesive tape
  - Surfit flexible flange 1½ inch
  - Convex insert disc 1½ inch
  - Baby bottle nipple
  - Umbilical clamp

**Steps to follow:**

1. Wash your hands with soap and water. Rinse with clean water and towel dry.

2. To remove the disc, gently put the pointed end of an umbilical clamp under the outside rim of the disc and lift it up. Thread the baby bottle nipple and disc off the tube. Peel the wafer away from the skin.

3. Put the old wafer dressing in a plastic bag and throw it into a waste basket. The disc and nipple may be reused.

4. Check the skin around the tube for tenderness, redness, or drainage. If there is drainage, check for unusual color, thickness, or odor. It is normal to have a small amount of drainage around the tube. If you have to change the wafer every day because of drainage, you should call your nurse or doctor for advice on using another dressing method.

5. Check that the mark on the tube is the same distance from your skin as before.

6. Clean the skin around the tube where the wafer was with warm water and soap. Use a cotton swab for hard to reach areas around the tube.

7. Dry the skin.

8. Put a small amount of stoma adhesive paste on the skin around the tube.
9. Remove the paper from the center section (A) on the new wafer.

10. Thread the tube through the small hole in the center of the wafer.

11. Remove the paper from area (B) by bending the slit edges sharply backwards. Do not remove the paper from the side edges at this time.

12. Press the wafer onto the skin.

13. Cut a small x in the top of the baby bottle nipple. Use a new nipple if it can no longer support the tube.

14. Thread the tube through the x until the rim of the nipple is inside the plastic ring on the wafer. If your tube will not slide through the x, take the nipple off and cut the x a little larger. The nipple keeps the tube upright. It should fit snugly.

15. Thread the tube through the disc so the curved side faces toward your skin like a dome.

16. Press the disc over the nipple until it snaps into place on the wafer.

17. Make a loop with the tube. Tape it securely to your abdomen. This keeps the tube from being pulled out by accident.

If you would like more written information, please call the Library for Health Information at (614)293-3707. You can also make the request by e-mail: health-info@osu.edu.