Wet to Dry Gauze Dressing

This type of dressing is used to remove drainage and dead tissue from your wound. If your wound is very deep or you have spaces that open under the skin or tunnel around your wound, you will need to put dressing into those spaces. This is called packing and it helps keep the space drained and allows it to heal from the inside out. Without the packing, the space may close off to form a pocket and not heal.

Your dressing will need to be changed:

- Every _____ hours
- When it comes loose or gets dirty

Steps to follow

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

2. Clean your work space using a paper towel, warm water and soap. Rinse with water on another paper towel. Use a clean dry paper towel to dry.

3. Gather your supplies:
   - Non sterile gloves
   - Gauze pads
   - Gauze packing tape, like Nugauze or pads if needed for packing wound
   - Large dressing pad, 5x9 or ABD pad
   - Roll of gauze if needed
   - Paper tape
   - Plastic trash bag
   - Scissors if needed
   - Normal saline
   - Small clean bowl or dish to use to hold dressings to be wet

4. Put on gloves.

5. Remove your old dressing. If you had packing tape, be sure to remove all of the packing. If the dressing is sticking to healing tissue, wet it with water before you remove it so it does not damage the healing tissue. Place the old dressing and packing in the plastic trash bag.

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

7. Wash your hands again.
8. Gently clean the wound with a washcloth, warm water and soap. Rinse with water and pat dry with a clean towel. If your wound starts to bleed, you are washing too hard.

9. If you are to use sterile saline or other solution for cleansing, pour some solution on a gauze pad and wipe wound gently or use a squirt bottle or syringe with solution to clean wound.

10. Check the wound for signs of infection. Call your doctor or nurse if you have:
   - Skin around the wound is more red, swollen, or feels hot
   - Wound smells bad
   - Pus drainage
   - Temperature above 100.5 F

11. Open the dressing packages on your work space. This should include:
   - Gauze packing tape or pads you will use to pack your wound if needed
   - Gauze pad(s) to wet with saline to cover the wound
   - Large pad to cover the wet gauze

12. Pour saline into the clean bowl or dish to wet the dressings.

13. Put on clean gloves.

14. Place the dressing and packing in bowl with saline to wet them.

15. Squeeze out the dressing so they are not dripping wet.

16. If you need to pack open spaces under your skin or tunneled spaces in your wound, use the wet gauze packing tape or open out the wet pads and loosely place the packing in the spaces. You may need to use a cotton swab to pack the small spaces. Refer to handout, Wound Packing.

17. Place the wet gauze pad in the wound. If the wound is large, put dry gauze on top of the wet gauze to fill the wound space and hold the wet gauze in place. Be sure the wet gauze is not on the healed skin around your wound because it may damage the skin.

18. Cover the wet gauze with the large pad.

19. Tape the edges of the pad with paper tape to hold it in place.

   or

   If you need to use a roll of gauze to hold the dressing in place, start to wrap from the side that is most away from your heart. So if this is a wound on your leg, start closest to your toes and wrap toward your knee or hip. The wrap should not be too tight. Tape the end of the gauze to hold it in place.

20. Put your supplies away.

21. Wash your hands again. Rinse and towel dry.
Cautions

- If you have extra dressings that were wet, throw them away. You will not be able to keep the wet dressing for the next dressing change because it can increase your risk of infection.

- If you notice that your wound has more tunnels or you need more gauze to pack your wound, call your doctor or nurse.

- As your wound heals, you should not need as much packing. You will need to adjust how much packing or other gauze you wet for the dressing.