

MY DRESSING CHANGE CHECKLIST

A Simple, Step-by-Step Guide for Changing Pressure Wound and Ulcer Bandages

Changing Dressings Safely

Keeping your pressure ulcer clean and changing its bandages properly is one of the best ways to help it heal. Bandages protect the open area from germs, soak up extra fluid, and keep the wound bed moist so new skin can grow back faster.

Golden Rule: Always clear off a clean, hard workspace (like a wiped table) before you open any medical supplies, and never rush the process.

PHASE 1: GETTING READY



Clean Your Workspace

Wipe down a table with a disinfectant spray or soap and water. Let it dry completely, then place a clean trash bag nearby.



Gather Your Supplies

Lay out your items on your clean surface: saline solution, prescription ointment/fillers, your clean secondary gauze or foam cover, medical tape, and clean medical gloves.



Wash Your Hands Thoroughly

Scrub your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds (the time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice). Dry your hands with a clean paper towel, then put on your first pair of clean gloves.

PHASE 2: REMOVING THE OLD BANDAGE



Gently Peel Back the Tape

Hold your surrounding skin down firmly with one hand while gently pulling the edges of the tape toward the wound with your other hand. This stops your skin from tearing or stretching.



Lift Away Old Dressings & Inspect

Carefully remove the used gauze or foam. Look at the fluid on the dressing—a small amount of clear or light pink fluid is normal. Drop the old bandage straight into your trash bag.



Throw Away First Pair of Gloves & Rewash

Peel off your dirty gloves, drop them in to the trash bag, and wash your hands with soap or use hand sanitizer again. Put on a fresh, clean pair of gloves before touching any new bandages.

PHASE 3: CLEANING & APPLYING THE NEW DRESSING



Clean the Wound with Saline

Pour prescribed saline wound cleanser over a clean piece of gauze. Gently wipe the center of the wound first, then wipe outward toward the healthy skin borders. Never rub or scrub the open wound, as this damages new healing tissue. Pat the surrounding skin dry.



Apply Prescribed Medication or Fillers

If your nurse told you to use ointment or loose hydro fiber packing for deep ulcers, apply it gently now using a clean cotton swab or your gloved finger. Do not press hard. Fill deep holes loosely so skin can grow.



Cover and Secure the Bandage

Place your clean foam cover or non-stick gauze pad squarely over the open wound area. Smooth it flat, then secure all four borders firmly with your medical tape to seal out outside germs.



WHEN TO CALL YOUR WOUND NURSE IMMEDIATELY

If you see any of these warning signs during a bandage change, leave the dressing on and contact your medical team:

- The fluid on the bandage becomes thick, milky, bright yellow or green, or smells foul.
- The skin around the wound looks hot, bright red, swollen, or the redness is spreading.
- You observe dark gray or black tissue forming inside the ulcer cavity.
- You develop general full-body chills or a fever above 101°F (38.3°C).

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Disclaimer: This printable checklist serves as an educational guide. Always prioritize specific prescription steps, packing techniques, or cleansing fluids dictated by your attending wound care physician.