

Video on 'Home Safety: Wound Care'

It is easy to suffer from accidental injuries such as bruises and cuts in our daily lives. When the accident occurs, we should keep calm. Make a quick assessment on wound site, severity of the injury and bleeding condition to decide how to manage it. For bleeding wound without foreign body, apply 'direct pressure' on the wound for about 5-15 minutes to stop bleeding. Clean and dress the wound properly to prevent wound infection. If bleeding persists or a foreign body is deeply seated in the wound, don't try to remove it as the bleeding may be worsened. Go to Accident & Emergency Department promptly. For dirty wounds, especially if contaminated by soil or rust, you should seek medical consultation promptly and assess the need for anti-tetanus toxoid (ATT) injection.

Next, we are going to show you how to clean the wound at home setting.

Generally, non-infected wound could be cleansed by normal saline. Antiseptics is not required. Normal saline (0.9% NaCl) is similar to human body fluid and therefore it will not irritate wound tissues and causes less pain when applied. Antiseptics may irritate the wound or cause allergic reaction.

Preparation for Wound Dressing

Put the patient in a comfortable position with adequate lighting. Keep the table clean by cleaning with detergent and water. Use 75% alcohol if needed. Prepare a disposable dressing set, including sterile field, forceps, plastic tray, cotton wool balls and gauze. Prepare sterile normal saline or cleaning solution instructed by doctor, mask and gloves if necessary. Also prepare surgical tape, bandage, scissors and a rubbish bag. *Wear surgical mask and wash hands thoroughly with soap before wound dressing.

**Wash hands before wearing a surgical mask.*

Wound Dressing Technique

Open the sterile package and arrange the plastic forceps. Pour adequate amount of cleansing solution into the container. Use a pair of forceps to remove the old dressing. If there are only two plastic forceps, put on gloves and remove the old dressing. Remember to wash hands afterwards. If the old dressing sticks to the wound, remove the outer dressing first, then soak the inner dressing with normal saline before removal. Discard the used forceps or gloves into rubbish bag. Use another two clean forceps for cleansing and dressing. Dip the cotton wool ball into the solution and

remove excessive solution by forceps or press it against the edge of container. Start wiping the wound from centre outwards, use one cotton wool ball for each wipe, repeat this step until the wound is clean. Pad the wound dry with gauze gently. Cover it with sterile dressing. Secure the dressing with surgical tape or bandages.

During the whole procedure, don't touch the wound or sterile gauze with hands to avoid contamination.

After Wound Dressing

Discard all used items in the rubbish bag and secure it tightly before disposal. Discard the remaining normal saline, do not reuse it and discard it in the rubbish bin. Wash hands thoroughly with liquid soap afterwards.

Remember: If there are signs of wound infection including fluid discharge, redness, swelling, warmth, gangrene, smelly, with blood stain or pus, or wound failed to heal after a period of time, you should seek medical consultation promptly.

Infected wound should be assessed by health care worker first and managed accordingly. Do not buy over-the-counter antiseptics to clean the wound. Carers can accompany elderly to nearby clinic for wound dressing. Frail or disabled persons can seek community nursing service. For details, please check with your doctor during your follow up visit.