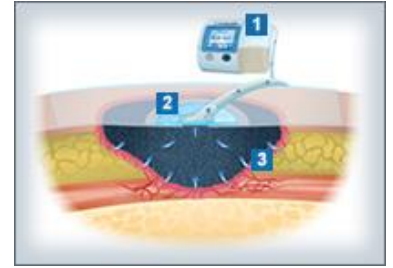


# Vacuum Assisted Closure (V.A.C.) Therapy: Dressing Change

## What is V.A.C.® Therapy?

V.A.C. Therapy helps a wound heal. It is a system with a soft vacuum in it. It:

- Helps close the wound.
- Removes fluids from the wound.
- Limits the need for daily dressing changes.



## VAC dressing placement

- The dressing goes on or inside the wound.
- One end of the tubing connects to the dressing. The other end connects to the canister that fits into the unit.
- The drape covers the dressing.

When the dressing is first put on, some children feel a mild pulling. After a few minutes, this goes away.

## Who will change the dressing when my child is in the hospital?

- Your child's doctor, or a physician assistant or nurse working with your child's doctor, will change the dressing when in the hospital.
- The dressing change may be done in the Operating Room or in the treatment room on the unit.
- You and your child will be prepared, no matter where the dressing is changed.

## Who will change the dressing when my child is at home?

- Your child's VAC dressing will be changed every few days. The Home Care Instruction sheet will say how often it will be changed.
- Most often the doctor, nurse or physician assistant will change the dressing in the clinic. Sometimes a nurse comes to your home to change the dressing.
- The doctor may ask you to take off the dressing so your child can shower before a new dressing is put back on. Take off the dressing **only** if the doctor has told you to do so.
- You will be told who will change your child's VAC dressing.

If your child's VAC dressing will be changed in the clinic, you will need to bring:

- The VAC therapy unit.
- An extra canister and tubing.
- Extra dressing.

If the old dressing was not removed at home, give your child pain medicine before coming to clinic.

## How do I remove the dressing?

Give your child pain medicine 20 minutes before you start to take the dressing off.

1. Gather the supplies.
2. Raise the tubing clamps above the level (higher than) the therapy unit.
3. Close the clamp on the tubing going to the dressing.
4. Separate the canister tubing and dressing tubing. Let any remaining fluid in the tubing run into the canister.
5. Close the clamp on the tubing going to the therapy unit.
6. Press the THERAPY ON/OFF button to turn the unit off.
7. Wait 30 seconds for the foam to “puff up”.

Note: At this point, you may take a syringe with one ounce (30 ml) tap water. Connect it to the tubing that leads to the dressing. Unclamp the tubing and gently push water up into dressing. Wait 15 minutes and then continue taking the dressing off.

Remove the drape by gently pulling to the side. Try not to pull straight up. Gently remove foam from the wound.

## Can my child bathe when at home?

- If the dressing is in place, showering or going into the tub is not allowed. You can simply wash up (like a bed bath).
- Some children are able to bathe when at home on “dressing change days”. Your child’s doctor will tell you if it is OK to take a bath at home.
- If you have been told to remove the dressing before the clinic visit, it is OK to let your child shower at home before the dressing is put back on at the clinic.
- See steps listed above to remove dressing.
- Do not let your child soak in a bathtub.
- Use a clean towel to pat the wound dry after the shower.
- Put a bandage over the open wound.

**ALERT:** Call your child’s doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has:

- A fever of 101.5° F (38.6°C).
- More pain at the wound.
- Bloody drainage in the VAC tubing.
- Pus or a bad smell from the wound.
- More redness or warmth around the wound.
- Has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

Also call if:

- You are having problems with the V.A.C. Therapy machine.
- The V.A.C. Therapy has been turned off for more than two hours.

**This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.**