

# Vacuum Assisted Closure (V.A.C.) Therapy



## Using an ACTIV.A.C.™ for wound care at home

### What is V.A.C.® Therapy?

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

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

The system has five parts:

1. A therapy unit or machine.
2. Foam dressings. The dressing goes on or inside the wound.
3. Clear adhesive drape. The drape covers the dressing.
4. Plastic tubing. One end of the tubing connects to the dressing. The other end connects to the canister that fits into the unit.
5. Canister.



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

### What do I need to know about using the ACTIV.A.C. Therapy unit at home?

- You are **renting** this machine. It must be returned after the therapy is done.
- Check the dressing. Be sure the foam dressing stays shrunk down. It should look like a wrinkled raisin.
  - If it does not look like a wrinkled raisin, call the clinic. If it is after hours, call the doctor on call or come to the Emergency Department.
- Make sure the machine is running when the dressing is on.
  - Never turn it off for more than two hours.
  - Do not change the settings.

### Other things to remember about the unit

- It has a 14-hour battery life.
- Use a three-prong electrical outlet with this unit.
- Keep the unit in the carrying case at all times.
- The unit should be upright with the touch screen facing up.
- Do not get the unit wet.

### Safety

- Be careful that no one trips on the extra tubing and electrical cord.
- Be careful that the tubing does not catch on anything.

## System alarm

V.A.C. Therapy unit has alarms that you can see and hear. They will alert you to a potential problem. Most often, the reason for the alarm is easily fixed. For information on alerts and alarms, refer to the documents that came with your unit.

- Call The KCI Product Issue Response team at **1-800-275-4524**.
- If KCI cannot solve the problem, call the clinic during the day time if this occurs. After hours, call the doctor on call or come to the Emergency Department.

## Activity

- Your child's ability to move around depends on their condition and the reason for the VAC Therapy.
- See the After Visit Summary (AVS) for your child's activity level.

## What do I do with the unit when it is no longer needed?

- When your doctor has decided the VAC. Therapy is no longer needed, call KCI at 1-800-275-4524 within 24 hours to start the return process.
- Tell the KCI representative:
  - Your child's name and phone number.
  - The date therapy ended.
- You will need to mail back the ACTIV.A.C. machine.

**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 or more drainage than your doctor told you about, in the VAC tubing.
- The V.A.C. dressing comes off.
- Pus or a bad smell from the wound.
- More redness or warmth around the wound.
- Special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

## Also call if:

- The foam dressing does not stay shrunk down and it does not look like a wrinkled raisin.
- You are having problems with the VAC Therapy machine.
- The VAC Therapy has been turned off for more than two hours.

**For more health and wellness information, check out this resource:**

<https://kidshealth.org/ChildrensWi/en/parents>

**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**