Infection Prevention
Quick Guide: Wound Care

Wound care can be any care that helps heal breaks in the skin (e.g., ulcers, surgical wounds). Some examples of wound care are dressing changes, irrigation, and debridement.

If basic infection practices are not followed with wound care, infections can be transmitted and outbreaks may occur. To prevent infection transmission with wound care, staff should follow Standard and Transmission-based or Enhanced Barrier Precautions.

Infection Prevention Checklist

1. Use Standard Precautions and Transmission-Based or Enhanced Barrier Precautions for residents with wounds. During a Group A *Streptococcus* outbreak, a mask should be worn for all wound care procedures until the outbreak is over.
   a. **Contact Precautions**: Use if the resident's wound is draining and *cannot* be covered and contained with a dressing.
   b. **Contact + Droplet Precautions**: Use if a resident's wound is suspected or confirmed to be infected with Group A Strep until 24 hours after starting effective antibiotic therapy.
   c. **Enhanced Barrier Precautions (EBP)**: Use if a resident's wound *can* be covered and contained with a dressing. For more about EBP: https://www.cdc.gov/long-term-care-facilities/hcp/prevent-mdro/ppe.html

2. Communicate with the resident and staff about all precautions to be used.

3. Ensure availability of hand hygiene products, personal protective equipment, and EPA-registered disinfectant in the resident's room and the area where wound care is being performed.

4. Ensure staff who perform wound care receive infection prevention education, training, and a competency assessment for wound care procedures. Also, make sure they are aware of the facility's wound care policies and procedures.
   a. Provide when hired, annually, with new wound care treatments or equipment, changes in policies and procedures, and in response to lapses in practices

5. Make sure key IPC practices are followed with wound care procedures:
   a. Refer to practice recommendations (https://tinyurl.com/cleanvssterile) to determine whether to use clean or sterile technique and associated supplies for the care of a chronic wound.
   b. Disinfect the surface where the clean field will be set up at the resident's bedside.
   c. Gather wound dressing supplies and place them on the clean field.
      - Dedicate multi-dose topical medications (e.g., ointments, creams) to an individual resident or dispense a small amount in a clean container for single resident use

d. Perform appropriate hand hygiene prior to the procedure, putting on gloves, and after gloves are removed (even during the procedure if gloves are changed)

e. Wear correct personal protective equipment based on Standard and Transmission-based or Enhanced Barrier Precautions

f. Change gloves and perform hand hygiene if moving from a dirty to clean task

g. Maintain a separation of clean and dirty items at all times

- Discard soiled disposable supplies in an appropriate bag or container (following OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard)

h. Clean and disinfect surfaces in the wound care area and any reusable equipment used during the procedure

i. Discard supplies that entered the resident care area or label and dedicate to the resident, storing in their room

6. Perform routine auditing of wound care procedures to evaluate compliance.
   a. VDH Wound Care Infection Prevention and Control Tool: https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/174/2023/10/VDH-Wound-Care-IPC-Tool-Checklist-External-Use-1.pdf

Wound Care: How to Share the News

1. To the resident and those authorized to receive health information: Because of your wound, we will be taking extra precautions like wearing gowns and gloves for wound care and while giving you care in your room. We will be washing our hands often and encourage you to do the same, especially if you have had contact with the wound.

2. To healthcare workers: This resident has a wound and requires additional precautions. At a minimum, you must always wear a gown and gloves during wound care. There are additional steps to follow to prevent transmitting infections such as performing appropriate hand hygiene before and after wound care (even if gloves are worn), cleaning the environment, and cleaning and disinfecting equipment after use.

Additional Resources

CDC Nursing Home Infection Preventionist Training Course (see module 10c for Infection Prevention During Wound Care): https://www.train.org/virginia/course/1081811/details