

Negative Pressure Wound Therapy (NPWT)

What is Negative Pressure Wound Therapy?

Negative Pressure Wound Therapy (NPWT) is a system that uses controlled negative pressure (vacuum) to help promote wound healing. It pulls infectious and other fluids from the wound and drains them into a canister. The system is called “VAC. Therapy System” or “Wound VAC” and includes:

- computer-controlled therapy unit
- a canister
- sterile plastic tubing
- an absorbent dressing
- clear draping material

The dressing goes on or inside the wound. One end of the tube connects to the drape. The other end connects to the canister which connects to the computer-controlled therapy system. The wound area is sealed with the clear drape.

What are the Benefits of the Wound Vac?

- Increases healing by bringing the blood and nutrients to the wound bed.
- Brings the wound to a level where it can be surgically repaired.
- Helps to stabilize the wound bed after surgical repair.
- Reduces risk for infection.
- Reduces swelling

What can I expect after the system is placed?

When the system is first turned on, patients feel a slight pulling sensation; after that, they should not feel anything out of the ordinary. Patients must keep the system connected in order for it to work.

How will I care for myself while I have negative pressure therapy?

Keep the negative pressure therapy on. Do not turn it off for period of greater than two hours. If this occurs, contact your home health care agency or healthcare provider for directions on how to remove the unit and dressing.

What signs do I need to watch for?

If you suddenly see an increase or a large amount of blood in the canister, do the following:

- Turn off the machine
- Leave dressing on wound
- Put pressure over wound
- Call 911

When do I need to call my home-care nurse or healthcare provider?

Call your home care nurse or healthcare provider **immediately** if you see any of the following signs and symptoms, which may indicate an infection.

- Foul odor from wound
- Pus draining from wound
- Area in or around wound becomes red, sore, or swollen
- Area in or around wound becomes warmer than surrounding skin
- Increase in wound pain

Stop the therapy and call your home care nurse or healthcare provider **immediately** if you see any of the following signs and symptoms, which may indicate an allergic reaction.

- Redness
- Swelling
- Rash or Hives
- Itching
- If you have difficulty breathing, **call 911.**

What do I do if the machine sounds an alarm?

If you hear an alarm check the following:

- Is the machine plugged in?
- Is the canister full?
- Is the tubing kinked or blocked?
- Is there a leak in the dressing seal?

If you need assistance trouble shooting the machine you can call:

- Your home care nurse
- KCI at 1-800-275-4524

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