

CHANGING YOUR OWN CATHETER DRESSING

This pamphlet provides information about the best and safest way to change your own catheter dressing. If you would like to do this, please talk to your hemodialysis nurse. You will do your first few dressing changes when you come for hemodialysis. Your nurse will teach and watch you while you change your dressing.

What does it mean to change your own catheter dressing (i.e., self-dressing change)?

It means that you change your catheter dressing when it needs to be changed. If you are unable, a caregiver/helper may do this for you.

What are the benefits of self-dressing changes?

- You control who changes your dressing.
- You can change your dressing at a time that suits you.
- If your dressing accidentally gets wet or falls off, you can put on a new dressing yourself.

For whom does self-dressing changes work best?

Self-dressing changes are not for everybody. But for many, it is an excellent choice.

Things that help to make self-dressing changes successful:

- Desire to do own dressing changes or have a caregiver/helper willing to do them.
- Good personal hygiene (to prevent infection).
- Able to pick up and move supplies.
- Able to recognize and act on signs of infection.

Before starting self-dressing changes, what is important to know?

1. Protect yourself from infection.
 - Clean, clean, clean. Wash your hands and use good technique every time you change your catheter dressing.
 - Wear a mask and gloves when changing your dressing.
 - Change your gloves after taking off your old dressing and putting on your new one.
 - Do not use sharp objects like scissors near the catheter tubing.
 - Do not open your catheter. Keep the caps and clamps of your catheter tightly closed.
2. Changing your catheter dressing
 - Change your dressing _____ days per week (talk to your nurse).
 - Try to keep your dressing dry. If it gets wet, change it.
 - You need to be in front of a mirror to change your dressing. Many people like to change their catheter dressing after bathing.
3. Notify your kidney doctor (nephrologist) or dialysis unit for any of the following:
 - Redness, warmth, or pain along the catheter.
 - Oozing or drainage from catheter exit site.
 - Noticeable swelling or itching around catheter or neck.
 - Feverish and any of the above symptoms.
 - Part of the catheter that is outside the skin seems to be getting longer.
 - Catheter is accidentally pulled and there is bleeding around the exit site.
 - Gauze around the ports is damp for an unknown reason.

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Changing your catheter dressing

Supplies

- Non-sterile gloves (2 pair)
- Face mask
- Hand sanitizer
- Small garbage bag
- Disinfectant swabs
- Dressing: gauze or clear - ask your nurse which dressing is right for you.
- Gauze package (4x4's)

Steps

1. Wash your hands for a full minute.
2. Put on face mask and unsterile gloves.
3. Prepare your supplies.
 - a. Open your dressing.
 - b. Open all packages with the bottom paper of the package still intact (e.g., swab or gauze pads).
 - c. Put on your mask.
4. Remove old dressing.
 - Look for any changes in your skin condition. Is it red? Is there drainage? Is there pain?
 - Report anything unusual to your kidney doctor or hemodialysis unit.
5. Remove gloves. Clean hands using hand sanitizer. Put on new gloves.
6. Clean site:
 - a. Using the swab, rub catheter site using a back and forth friction motion that covers a 5 cm (2 in) x 5 cm (2 in) area .
 - b. Allow the area to air dry.
7. Attach new dressing
 - a. Apply new dressing to site. Attached to skin overlapping about two inches of the catheter under the dressing. Avoid touching the middle part of dressing.
8. Wrap lines with dry 4x4 gauze.



Catheter with gauze dressing



Catheter with clear dressing



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