

Negative Pressure Wound Therapy

**A Portable System for
Advanced Wound Healing**

Negative Pressure Wound Therapy

What is negative pressure wound therapy?

Negative pressure wound therapy is a machine that uses controlled negative pressure (like a vacuum) to help heal wounds. The machine is portable (you can carry it with you). The machine is ordered by your doctor or nurse practitioner.

Safety at home

- **Do not** touch or change the machine's settings. Only your doctor, nurse practitioner, or your nurse should change the settings.
- **Do not** use extension cords with the machine. Plug the machine directly into a wall outlet.
- Use a 3-pronged outlet adapter if your home does not have 3-pronged outlets.
- Keep cords out of areas where people often walk (like the kitchen).
- **Do not** try to fix or service the machine yourself.

- **Do not** spill liquids on the machine. **It must stay dry.**
- **Never** plug more than 2 appliances into an outlet at once.

Common questions

What does the therapy feel like?

- Most people who use this therapy say that it is **not** painful. It causes a mild ‘pulling’ feeling that goes away after a few minutes. If you are in pain, tell your nurse.

Can I move around while using the machine?

- Yes. The machine is made to allow you to move freely.
- Your doctor or nurse practitioner will let you know how much movement is OK.

What are your questions?

Please ask a member of your health care team. We are here to help you.

Can I get in the tub or have a shower while using the machine?

- **No. The machine cannot get wet.**
- You may have a sponge bath while using the machine.



How many hours a day should I use the machine?

- The machine must be running at all times.

What should I do if the machine is off?

- If the machine is turned off by accident, push the “ON/OFF” button to turn the machine back on. The machine will turn on to the correct settings.

- If the machine is turned off for more than 2 hours:
 - › take off your dressing and cover the wound with a different kind of dressing.
 - › your nurse will give you this dressing.
 - › **If this happens, call the home care nurse (like VON)** (see important phone numbers on page 9).

What will the dressing look like when the machine is working?

- The dressing will get smaller. Wrinkles will form in it.

How often does the dressing have to be changed?

- The dressing will be changed 2 to 3 times a week. Your doctor, nurse practitioner, or nurse will work with you to plan your dressing changes.

Will the dressing change hurt?

- You may feel a bit of pain when the dressing is changed. If this happens, tell your nurse.

What should I bring if I am admitted to the hospital?

- Bring the machine, power cords, and the case to the hospital with you.
- **Call the home care nurse (like VON) to tell them you are in the hospital** (see important phone numbers on page 9).

Tips

- Keep the machine plugged in as much as you can. This keeps the battery charged.
- **Check often:**
 - › Is the machine on?
 - › Does the display screen read “therapy on”?
 - › Are the clamps open?

This pamphlet is just a guide. If you have questions, please talk to your health care provider. We are here to help you.

Safety tips

- For your safety, the machine will sound an alarm if any of the following happens:
 - › The canister is full
 - › Your dressing leaks
 - › Your battery is low

Follow the instructions below:

The canister is full.

- Check to see if the tubing is kinked (bent).
- Replace the canister, if full.
- Call the Clinic or home care nurse (like VON) if the alarm does not stop.

Your dressing leaks.

- Listen for a whistling sound at the dressing site.
- If you hear whistling, put a layer of the plastic covering over the part of the dressing where you hear whistling.
- Call the Clinic or home care nurse (like VON) if the leak does not stop.

The battery is low.

- Recharge the battery by plugging the machine into a wall outlet.

Other things to look for:

There is bleeding under the clear dressing, in the tubing, or in the canister.

- Turn off the machine.
- Clamp the tubing between the dressing and the machine.
- Press on the wound with your hand. If the wound is on your arm or leg, raise your arm or leg on a pillow.
- **Go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.**

Other information:

- You may have your negative pressure wound dressing removed and a different dressing applied just before you go home.
- If this happens, your nurse will arrange for a home care nurse (like VON) to come into your home or for you to go to a home care clinic (like VON) to have a different negative pressure wound dressing applied.

Tell your doctor, nurse practitioner, or nurse right away if:

- › you have a fever
(temperature above 38 °C or 100.4 °F).
- › the wound is painful, red, or swollen.
- › there is a rash, a change in colour, or more warmth around the wound.
- › you are vomiting (throwing up).
- › you have an upset stomach, diarrhea (loose, watery poop), headache, sore throat, or dizziness.
- › you see a change in the fluid.
For example, the fluid becomes bloody or cloudy.
- › the wound is more red or has a smell.
- › you feel more pain.
- › the alarm will not stop.

Important phone numbers

Home care nurse (like VON): _____

Clinic: _____

Doctor. _____

Office: _____

**What are your questions? Please ask.
We are here to help you.**

**In Nova Scotia you can call 811 to talk with
a registered nurse about your health care
questions 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.**

Notes:

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:
<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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