

# Negative Pressure Wound Therapy

PICO◇ Single Use System

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>

*Prepared by:* Interprofessional Practice and Learning Wound Prevention and Management Program

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To be reviewed April 2027 or sooner, if needed.

Notes:

# Negative Pressure Wound Therapy

## What is negative pressure wound therapy?

- This therapy is given by 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 attached to the dressing covering your wound.
- The machine is ordered by your doctor or nurse practitioner.

## Safety at home

- **Do not** try to fix the machine yourself.
- Be careful not to spill liquids on the machine. **It must stay dry.**

## Common questions

### What does the therapy feel like?

Most people who use this therapy say that it does not hurt. It causes a mild, pulling feeling that goes away after a few minutes. If you have pain, tell your nurse.

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### Does the machine make noise?

- You may hear the machine speed up sometimes. This means it is working to keep up the pressure. If the green light is flashing, the machine is OK.
- A constant buzzing may mean:
  - › The machine has lost a seal.
  - › The battery is dead.
  - › The dressing is saturated (full) and needs to be changed.

### Can I move around while using the machine?

Yes. The machine is made to let you move freely. Your doctor or nurse practitioner will tell you how much movement is right for you.

### Can I take a bath or a shower while using the machine?

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

### How many hours a day does the machine need to be on?

- **The PICO $\diamond$  dressing should stay on at all times.** The only time the dressing or machine should be off is when your dressing is being changed.
- If you see that the machine stops working, see page 9.

### Important phone numbers:

Provider:	Name:	Phone:
VON or Nova Scotia Health Continuing Care Nursing Services Clinic		
Doctor or nurse practitioner's 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.**

Other things to look for:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Fever (temperature above 38 °C or 100.4 °F)</li> <li>› Wound is more tender or red</li> <li>› Area around wound changes colour, swells, has a rash, or is more warm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call your doctor or nurse practitioner. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› If you cannot reach your doctor or nurse practitioner, call 811.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach)</li> <li>› Vomiting (throwing up)</li> <li>› Diarrhea (loose, watery poop)</li> <li>› Headache</li> <li>› Sore throat</li> <li>› Dizziness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call your doctor or nurse practitioner. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› If you cannot reach your doctor or nurse practitioner, call 811.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- If you cannot get the machine to work, call your home care nurse (like V.O.N. [Victorian Order of Nurses for Canada] or Nova Scotia Health Continuing Care Nursing Services).

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

The dressing will pull down against your skin and be firm to the touch. You may see shadows on the dressing from drainage.

**How often does the dressing need to be changed?**

The dressing needs to be changed at least once a week. Your doctor or nurse practitioner will decide if the dressing is changed more often based on your incision or wound.

**Will the dressing change hurt?**

You may feel a bit of pain when the dressing is changed. If this happens, tell your nurse. They may ask you to turn the machine off before they visit to help lower your pain.

**What if I am admitted to the hospital?**

- Bring any extra PICO $\diamond$  dressings.
- Call your home care nurse to tell them you are in the hospital.

## Tips

### Each day:

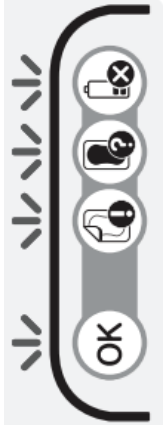
- **Keep the machine on at all times**, unless your doctor or nurse practitioner tells you not to.
- If the machine is turned off by mistake, push the on/off button to turn it back on. The machine will start on the correct settings and your therapy will keep going.

### Check often:

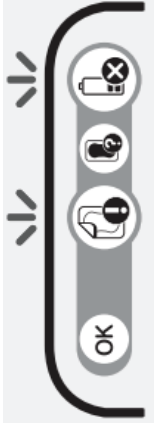
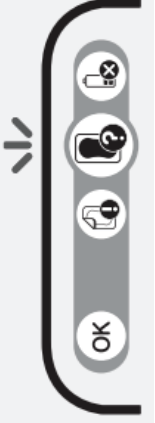
- Is the machine on? You should see a flashing, green light.
- Are there any kinks (bends) in the tubing?

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

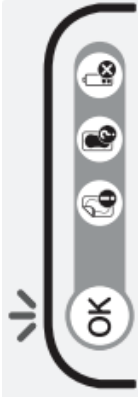
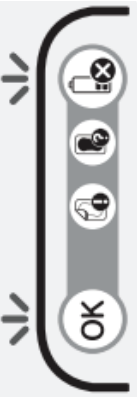
- Your wound has more redness or has a bad smell.
- The dressing fills quickly with blood.
- You feel more pain.
- The machine is not working.


<b>Display:</b> All lights lit up, not flashing 	<b>What it means:</b> The machine is not working. <b>What to do:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Call your home care nurse to change the dressing and the machine.</li></ul>
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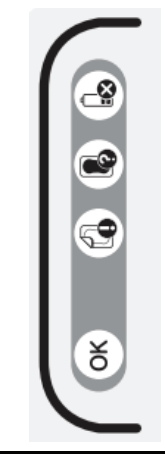
<b>Other things to look for:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Bleeding under dressing</li></ul>	<b>What to do:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Turn off the machine. <b>Do not</b> remove the dressing.</li><li>• Apply pressure over the dressing.</li><li>• <b>Go to the nearest urgent care clinic or Emergency Department right away.</b></li></ul>
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<p><b>Display:</b></p> <p>Orange “leak” and orange “battery” lights flashing</p> 	<p><b>What it means:</b></p> <p>There is low pressure on the dressing because of an air leak and the batteries are low.</p> <p><b>What to do:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Change the batteries, smooth down the dressing, and press the orange button to restart the machine.</li> <li>&gt; If the orange light keeps flashing, call your home care nurse.</li> </ul>
<p>Orange “dressing” light flashing</p> 	<p>The dressing is full.</p> <p><b>What to do:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Call your home care nurse to change the dressing.</li> </ul>

**How will I know if the dressing is working?**

<p><b>Display:</b></p> <p>Green “OK” light flashing</p> 	<p><b>What it means:</b></p> <p>The machine is working.</p>
<p>Green “OK” light and orange “battery” light flashing</p> 	<p>The batteries are low.</p> <p><b>What to do:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Change the batteries and press the orange button to restart the machine.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Display:</b> Orange “leak” light flashing</p> 	<p><b>What it means:</b> There is low pressure on the dressing due to an air leak.</p> <p><b>What to do:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Smooth down the dressing and make sure the tube connectors are twisted together well. Then press the orange button to restart the machine.</li> <li>&gt; If the orange light keeps flashing, call your home care nurse.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Display:</b> No lights on the machine</p> 	<p><b>What it means:</b> The machine has been turned off.</p> <p><b>What to do:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Press the orange button to restart the machine.</li> <li>&gt; If the machine does not restart, it may need to be replaced. Call your home care nurse.</li> </ul>
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