



Patient & Family Guide
2021

Negative Pressure Wound Closure Therapy

A Portable System for Advanced
Wound Healing



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Negative Pressure Wound Closure Therapy

What is negative pressure wound closure therapy?

Negative pressure wound closure therapy is a portable (you can carry it with you) machine that uses controlled negative pressure (like a vacuum) to help heal wounds. This machine is ordered by your primary health care provider.

Safety at home

Do not touch the machine's settings. Only your primary health care provider or nurse should change the settings.

If your home does not have 3-pronged outlets, use a 3-pronged adapter.

- Do not use extension cords with the machine.
- Keep electrical cords out of areas where people often walk (like the kitchen).
- Do not try to service or fix 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.

The wound may get tender or itchy as it heals. This is usually a good sign. If the pain or itching bothers you, tell your caregiver.

Can I move around while using the machine?

Yes, the machine is made to let you move freely. Your primary health care provider will tell you how much you can move your arm or leg with the dressing.

Can I have a tub bath or 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?

You should use the machine for at least 22 hours each day.

If the machine is turned off for more than 2 hours, you must 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 VON (Victorian Order of Nurses for Canada).**

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

The dressing will shrink (get smaller) and wrinkle like a raisin.

How often does the dressing have to be changed?

The dressing will be changed 3 times a week. Your primary health care provider or nurse will work with you to make a plan for this.

Will the dressing change hurt?

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

If you are admitted to a hospital:

- Bring the machine and its case to the hospital with you.
- Call the VON to tell them you are in the hospital (see page 8).

Tips

Every day

- Use the machine for at least **22 hours** each day. Do not turn off the machine for more than 2 hours at a time.
- 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.
- Keep the machine plugged in as much as possible to keep the battery charged.

Check often

- Is the machine on?
- Does the display screen read “therapy on”?
- Are the clamps open?

Safety tips

For your safety, the machine will sound an alarm if any of the following happens:

| Machine will alarm if: | Action: |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Canister is full. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Check to see if the tubing is kinked (bent).<input type="checkbox"/> Replace canister, if full.<input type="checkbox"/> Call the Clinic or VON if the alarm continues. |
| Your dressing leaks. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Listen for a whistling sound at the dressing site.<input type="checkbox"/> If you hear whistling, put a layer of the plastic covering over the part of the dressing where you hear whistling.<input type="checkbox"/> Call the Clinic or VON if the leak continues. |
| Battery is low. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Recharge battery by plugging into a wall outlet. |

| Other things to look for: | Action: |
|---|---|
| Bleeding under clear dressing, in the tubing, or in the canister. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Call your primary health care provider or nurse. <input type="checkbox"/> Turn off the machine. <input type="checkbox"/> Clamp and unplug the tubing between the dressing and the machine. <input type="checkbox"/> Apply pressure to the wound with your hand and raise your arm or leg up on pillows. |
| Machine is turned off for more than 2 hours. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Call your primary health care provider or nurse. <input type="checkbox"/> Remove the dressing. <input type="checkbox"/> Apply the other dressing that you were given. |

| Other things to look for: | Action: |
|--|--|
| <p>You have a fever (temperature above 38.5° C/101.3° F).</p> <p>The wound is tender, red, swollen, or itchy.</p> <p>There is a rash or more warmth in the wound area.</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Call your primary health care provider or nurse.</p> |
| <p>You are vomiting (throwing up).</p> <p>You have an upset stomach, diarrhea (loose, watery poop), headache, sore throat, or dizziness.</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Call your primary health care provider or nurse.</p> |

Tell your primary health care provider or nurse right away if:

- › You notice a change in the colour or make-up of the fluid (for example, the fluid becomes bloody or cloudy)
- › The wound is more red or has an odour (smell)
- › You feel more pain
- › The alarm will not stop

Important phone numbers

VON: _____

Clinic: _____

Dr. _____

Office: 902-473-_____

Resident on call: **902-473-2222**

Ask for the _____ resident on call.

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Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

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

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.