



Practice Update

The Center for Professional Development and Practice



June 2012

Wound V.A.C. Therapy

Vacuum Assisted Closure (V.A.C.) is an advanced wound healing therapy that promotes wound healing through the use of negative pressure. A provider must order this type of wound therapy. Due to the complexity involved with the set-up and dressing changes, the surgeon who is following the patient, or Sandra Oehlke, RN, CWOCN, should perform all dressing and V.A.C. changes.

There are additional resources available to assist nursing staff with dressing changes or troubleshooting the devices in the event that Sandra is unavailable. These resources include:

- Kathryn Mitchell, RN: infectious disease nurse, pager: 651-629-3161
- Robin Huneke-Rosenberg: RN, vascular access nurse, pager: 651-629-1580
- Children's Bio Med and representatives of KCI are also available to help trouble shoot issues with the wound V.A.C. that cannot be solved using Children's online resources.
- KCI (Wound V.A.C. company) has representatives available 24 / 7
The number for KCI is on the wound V.A.C.: 1-800-275-4524

Discharge planning: As soon as you receive a patient with a Wound V.A.C., ask if they will be discharged with the device. If so, contact Care Management as soon as possible, as the process to obtain this therapy for home is complex and takes time.

Trouble-shooting: Tips for trouble-shooting alarms and other issues can be found here:

<http://khan.childrensmn.org/web/cpd/skin/198545.pdf>

<http://khan.childrensmn.org/web/cpd/skin/198461.pdf>

Remember, if V.A.C. therapy is interrupted for more than **two hours**, the patient is at risk for infection and the dressing must be removed. It is usually replaced with moist saline gauze and a cover dressing changed every 6 hours.

Patient and Family Education: Key points every family needs to know are:

- Call your provider for: Fever > 102 degrees
- Diarrhea, nausea, headache, sore throat
- Dizziness, confusion
- Redness or rash around the wound
- Wound or skin that is very warm to touch and very firm.
- Wound is sore, red or very swollen
- Bleeding, purulent, or foul-smelling drainage from wound
- Dressing comes off at home
- Any other questions or concerns