

Patient information

Negative Pressure Wound Therapy NPWT

VAC, TNP, NPWT, AVANCE, ACTIVAC, PICO and Prevena

Tissue Viability

What is Negative Pressure Wound Therapy (NPWT)?

It is a specialised form of wound healing treatment that applies suction to your wound through a sterile dressing or foam which is cut to the size of your wound. This is held in place with a clear sticky dressing. A plastic tube is attached to the dressing or foam and connected to a suction pump.

It works by sucking all the excess fluid out of the wound. This suction also encourages a better blood supply to make your wound heal quicker.

The skin around your wound is kept dry, more oxygen and other cells needed for wound healing are taken to the area and the wound edges are drawn together.

Care should be taken not to lie on the tubing that leads from your wound to the pump as this may make your skin sore. Please ask your nurse about this.

How long will it take to improve your wound?

This depends on your general condition, the size and type of your wound. Any questions you have should be directed towards your nurse or the specialist tissue viability nurse.

Is the therapy painful in any way?

You may feel a slight sucking or drawing sensation when the suction is first started or when the sticky dressing is removed. Sometimes the wound can become tender or itch as it heals. You can be given pain relief if necessary.

Benefits of having this therapy

- Fluid loss from the wound is controlled allowing you to be more comfortable and keep your skin and clothes dry.
- An increased blood supply is achieved by the sucking action. This helps the wound to heal quicker.

Risks involved in the therapy

There is a very small risk of some bleeding from the wound, particularly if you are receiving treatment which affects the clotting of your blood. Therapy may be delayed if your blood clotting is not within normal range.

What will happen if I don't have this therapy?

Alternative wound dressings will be used but they may not be able to deal with the amount of fluid leaking from your wound and healing may not be as quick.

How often does the dressing have to be changed?

Normally the dressing is changed twice weekly, but this depends on the type of wound that you have and whether you are in the hospital or community.

If the Prevena system or PICO system is in use these can be left in place for 7 days but your nursing staff will be able to advise what is the planned frequency for your individual wound.

Will changing the dressing hurt?

Some people do experience discomfort during dressing changes depending on the type and location of the wound. The nursing staff can give you pain relief before the procedure.

How many hours a day does the pump need to be on for?

It is recommended that the machine be turned on for 24 hours a day. If any less, your wound will not receive the full benefit of the therapy.

What happens if the machine alarms?

The pump has both audio and visual alarms, which identify what the problem is and most are easily solved. This is something your nurse can explain in more detail.

Can I go home with the therapy?

Yes, this may be possible. If so a portable pump will be used. The community nurses are experienced in caring for people having this therapy at home.

Nursing staff will be able to advise you of the process as it differs depending on what area of the country you will be being discharged to.

Patients who are using VAC or Prevena systems also have access to a 24-hour company helpline if they have any questions or need help and advice.

VAC and Prevena Company helpline: 0800 980 8880.

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further Information

Tissue Viability Nurses

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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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زانباریی پیوه‌ندی‌دار بهو نه‌خوشانه‌می له‌لایهن تراسته‌وه په‌سه‌ند کراون، نه‌گمر داوا بکریت له فورماته‌کانی تردا بریتی له زمانه‌کانی تر، نیزی رید (هاسان خویندنه‌وه)، چاپی گه‌وره، شربتی دهنگ، هیلی موون و نه‌لیکترۆنیکی هه‌یه.

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