

Understanding Debridement of Sores

Introduction

Some sores have trouble healing on their own. Sores that will not heal are also known as wounds or chronic wounds. A chronic wound is a sore that is having a hard time healing.

Sometimes sores develop unhealthy tissue. It can cause problems with healing. Debridement is the process of getting rid of unhealthy tissue from a sore.

Wounds that are having a hard time healing may develop dead tissue. Dead tissue can cause your wound to become infected with germs (bacteria). If this happens, debridement will need to be done to clean away unhealthy tissue.

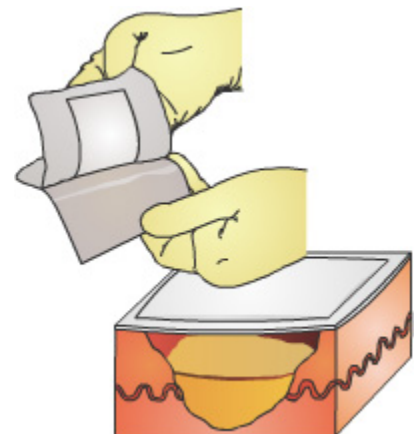


Debridement helps a wound heal better and faster. It also makes your wound less likely to get infected. Debridement may need to be done more than one time. There are many different ways that debridement can be done. This reference summary will go over the different types of debridement available. It will also cover some of their advantages and disadvantages.

Autolytic Debridement

Autolytic debridement works with your body's natural healing processes to debride a wound.

Special dressings are used to help the body get rid of unhealthy tissue. The dressings used for this covers the wound and keeps the wound moist by allowing the body's own wound fluids to remain in the wound keeping it not too wet or not too dry.



Autolytic debridement is simple. It is generally pain free. Healthy tissue is not hurt during autolytic debridement.

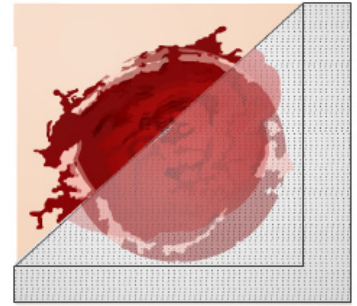
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Autolytic debridement is slow. It can take weeks to complete. Autolytic debridement is not right for everyone. It is not for people who need fast debridement or have an infection in their wound.

Mechanical Debridement

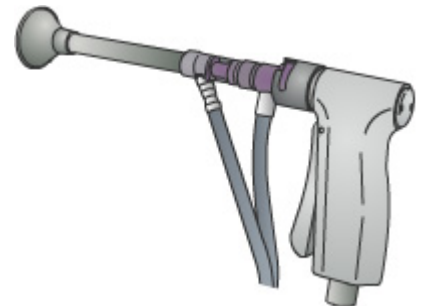
Mechanical debridement removes unhealthy tissue with several methods. These methods remove unhealthy tissue with force.

Mechanical debridement may be done with wet-to-dry dressings, hydrotherapy, or ultrasound. Wet-to-dry dressings are one of the most common methods of mechanical debridement. They are usually done several times a day. A moist dressing is put on the wound. After it has dried it is removed. This pulls off unhealthy tissue. It also can remove or hurt some healthy tissue.



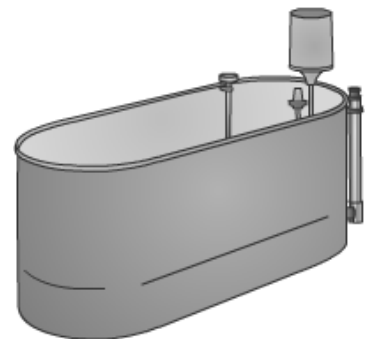
Wet to dry dressings are easy to do. But, they can cause pain, bleeding, and hurt healthy tissue.

Hydrotherapy is another form of mechanical debridement. The most common type of hydrotherapy is called pulsatile-lavage. Pulsatile-lavage uses a syringe filled with saline to flush the wound. Saline is a solution made out of distilled water and salt. Sometimes special machines can do this too.



Pulsatile-Lavage

Whirlpool therapy is a form of hydrotherapy. During whirlpool therapy, a person gets into a warm bath of moving water. Sometimes a person only needs to place the area with the wound into the whirlpool. The warm moving water helps remove unhealthy tissue. It can also make blood circulate better.



Whirlpool Therapy

Hydrotherapy is usually not painful. Less healthy tissue is hurt than with wet-to-dry dressings. But, there is a risk of infection.

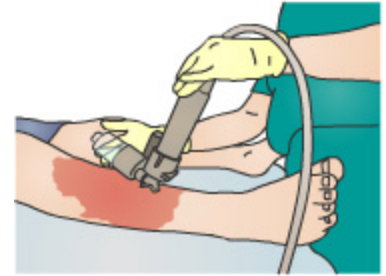
Ultrasound is another form of mechanical debridement. Low frequency sound waves are used to remove unhealthy tissue. Ultrasound also helps the wound heal. Ultrasound debridement is less painful than other kinds of mechanical debridement. It also causes less bleeding.

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Surgical Debridement

Surgical debridement is the most common type of debridement for wounds that are having trouble healing. It can be done with a scalpel, scissors, lasers, or other tools.

Surgical debridement can be done in an operating room or at the bedside. It can be done using general anesthesia, local anesthesia, or no anesthesia. General anesthesia uses special drugs to make you unconscious. This means that you will not be awake or feel pain during the procedure. Local anesthesia uses drugs that make it so you cannot feel pain in a specific area. The type of surgical debridement your doctor or healthcare provider may decide to do will be based on your specific case.



Sharps debridement and laser debridement are two types of surgical debridement. During sharps debridement, unhealthy tissue is quickly scraped or cut away. A scalpel, scissors or other surgical tools can be used. Laser debridement uses lasers to remove the unhealthy tissue.

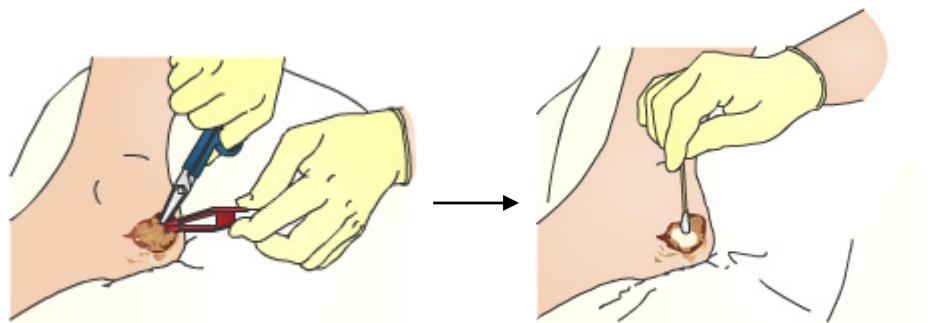


Surgical debridement is fast. It is the fastest method of debridement available. It is also the best at removing all the unhealthy tissue. It can be used to debride most types of wounds. This includes both infected and non-infected wounds. Surgical debridement can cause pain. It also may not be right for people who have bleeding problems since it can cause bleeding.

Enzymatic Debridement

Enzymatic debridement uses a special medicine that is put in the wound. The wound is then covered with a dressing.

The medicine is an ointment that has enzymes that dissolve only unhealthy tissue. An enzyme is a microscopic substance made out of protein that starts a chemical reaction. The



enzyme in the ointment destroys the dead tissue. It makes it easy to wipe away. The enzymatic debridement ointment requires a prescription from your doctor.

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Once the enzyme has done its job, your wound will be very red inside. This is normal. Your doctor or healthcare provider will let you know when you can stop using the enzymatic debridement ointment.

Enzymatic debridement may be used after surgical debridement. This helps clean your wound more and prepare it for healing.

Enzymatic debridement is faster than autolytic and some forms of mechanical debridement. It is slower than surgical debridement.

Enzymatic debridement ointments may cause redness in the skin surrounding the wound if the enzyme gets on the skin. Enzymatic debridement is safe and does not cause bleeding.

MDT

Maggot debridement therapy (MDT) is another treatment for wounds.

Sterile fly larvae, also known as maggots, are put on the wound. The wound is covered with a special dressing that stops the larvae from escaping. They are left in place for up to 3 days.



Sterile maggots of the green bottle fly are used for MDT. These maggots are clean. They are immature and cannot reproduce. The maggots are removed from the wound long before they mature. They will not become flies while in the wound.

MDT is very safe. The larvae dissolve unhealthy tissue and kill bacteria. They also help speed up healing. MDT therapy is not painful. It does not cause bleeding. It can be used on infected wounds. Some people may find the idea of MDT gross or disturbing. MDT may cause your wound to feel itchy.

Summary

Debridement is an important part of the healing process for wounds that have dead tissue. It removes dead and unhealthy tissue from your wound. This helps it heal better. If you have a sore that is not healing well, you may need debridement. Call a doctor or healthcare provider and talk to them about your sore.

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Debridement can help sores that are not healing well heal. Your doctor or healthcare provider will look at your wound and discuss what needs to be done to get your wound to heal. If your doctor suggests debridement, talk with them about what kind of debridement is best for you. There are several ways that debridement can be done. Each has its own advantages and disadvantages.

Common types of debridement include:

Autolytic

Autolytic debridement is a natural debridement method. It works with your body. It is a slow process.



Mechanical

Mechanical debridement uses force to remove unhealthy tissue. Wet-to-dry dressings, hydrotherapy and ultrasound are all types of mechanical debridement.

Surgical

Surgical debridement is the fastest and most thorough method of debridement. But, it can cause pain and bleeding. It can be done with traditional surgical tools or lasers.

Enzymatic

Enzymatic debridement uses a special medicine that is put on a wound. It dissolves only dead and unhealthy tissue. Enzymatic debridement is safe and effective.

MDT

MDT stands for maggot debridement therapy. It uses sterile fly larvae that are placed on the wound to clean away unhealthy tissue and kill bacteria. MDT is safe, painless, and effective. Some people do not like the idea of MDT.

Once your wound has been debrided, be sure to follow your doctor's directions for the care of your wound. Always wash your hands before and after working with your sore.

Talk with your doctor or healthcare provider. If you have any questions, make sure to ask. If you have a sore that is not healing and haven't seen a doctor yet, make an appointment. Treatment can help.



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