# Wound Swabbing

NHS
Dumfries
& Galloway

- Swabs should not be taken routinely or from an uninfected wound
- Swabs are taken to identify and quantify the number of bacteria present in a wound.
- · Wound swabs cannot be used to confirm and/or exclude infection. Results need to be reviewed in context of the clinical picture

### Step 1

Advise your patient of the swab procedure and obtain permission. Cleanse the wound using warm saline solution and debride non-viable tissue.

Cleanse the wound again

#### Step 2

Moisten the culture tip for dry wounds with saline solution

### Step 3

Inform the patient of potential discomfort

## Step 4

Using a sterile technique take the swab from the cleanest area of the wound by placing the wound swab into the wound, press swab firmly into the wound and rotate. Where possible do not obtain from Necrotic or Sloughy tissue

### Step 5

Label container with patient information, location of the swab (e.g. sacral wound), time and date and initials of who obtained the swab. Specifically write if they are diabetic/immunosuppressed/suspect osteomyelitis. Also include the pathology slip.

Provide all relevant patient history as appropriate, such as;

- Current antibiotic or medications
- Co-morbidities
- Specific microbe suspected
- · Diagnosis of the wound
- Duration of the wound

If in doubt, contact your Infection Control Nurse or Microbiologist

Cover the wound with appropriate dressings, for further guidance see NHS Dumfries and Galloway Wound formulary

or contact Tissue Viability Dept.

If the wound is dry, moisten the swab using 0.9% sodium chloride (normal saline solution) or transport medium prior to swabbing the wound

Try to take the swab as close to the collection time as possible
Take the specimen the next morning rather than the night before

Please do not send dry swabs to the laboratory

Created by Tissue Viability Department, NHS Dumfries & Galloway Oct 2022. All information is based on the Levine Technique of wound swabbing. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21303456/

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