

CHEAT SHEET WOUND CLEANSING

SUMMARY:

Wound cleansing is a fundamental component of wound bed preparation. Wound cleansing is defined as actively removing surface contaminants, loose debris, non-attached non-viable tissue, microorganisms and/or remnants of previous dressings from the wound surface and its surrounding skin. Therapeutic cleansing is rigorous cleansing of chronic or hard-to-heal wounds and is performed:

- To remove excessive wound exudate or debris from the wound bed to optimise visualisation and reliable assessment.
- Prior to collection of a wound sample (swab or biopsy).
- To assist in hydrating a desiccated wound bed.

KEY POINTS:

Acute Wound Cleansing

- Use ANTT and sterile saline for acute surgical wound cleansing up to 48 hours post-surgery.
- Patient's may shower safely 48 hours after surgery.
- Non-contaminated acute wounds, healing by secondary intention, that do not show clinical signs of infection should / may be cleansed with sodium chloride 0.9% stored at room temperature.
- Acute wounds, healing by secondary intention, identified as at high risk of local wound bed infection or where bacterial colonisation is suspected or local or spreading infection has been diagnosed, should be cleansed with the OUH Trust recommended antiseptic wound cleansing solution: polyhexanide biguanide and betaine surfactant solution (Prontosan irrigation solution ®).
- Avoid wound cleansing in adults, children and neonates that have a high risk of bleeding. Wound cleansing may be contraindicated in neonates due to the risk of core temperature fluctuation.

Chronic (hard to heal wounds) Wound Cleansing

A chronic wound is one that has failed to progress through the phases of healing in an orderly and timely fashion and has shown **no significant progress toward healing** in 4 weeks.

- Use the OUH Trust recommended antiseptic wound cleansing solution: polyhexanide biguanide and betaine surfactant solution (Prontosan irrigation solution ®) for chronic wound cleansing.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CLICK ON LINK:

[Wound Infection Pathway](#)

[IWII-CD-2022-web-1.pdf \(woundinfection-institute.com\)](#)