

Adult Chest Tube Dressing Change



Follow Policy [17002 Chest Tube Management](#) for chest tube dressing change frequency.

Gather materials:

- Non-sterile gloves
- 2 drain sponges according to patient size
- 2 – 4x4" gauze sponges
- Chlorhexidine (ChlorPrep)
- 1 – 5x9" occlusive gauze (either xeroform or petroleum)
- 1 – Tape 2"-4"
- Sterile gloves



1. Wash hands and apply non-sterile gloves



2. Remove old dressing. Check chest drainage system before and after removing dressing for bubbling.
3. Open packages and don sterile gloves.
4. Inspect site for:
 - Bleeding
 - Drainage (color, amount, type)
 - Swelling
 - Redness and/or any skin discoloration
 - Exposed chest tube holes
 - Air leaks
 - Condition of sutures
 - Notify the provider if any of these signs are present



5. Use the chlorhexidine swabs to cleanse the area and the first 2 inches of the chest tube starting where it exits the skin. Repeat twice and allow to dry.



6. Apply occlusive gauze around the chest tube at the insertion site, making an air-tight seal.
 - **EXCEPTION:** Adult Cardiac and General Thoracic Surgery do not use occlusive gauze (neither xeroform nor petroleum).



Intact package for demonstration only. Package should be opened prior to donning sterile gloves.



7. Apply the split 4x4" gauze dressing/sponges around the chest tube so the openings do not lie directly over one another.



8. Lay two 4x4" gauze sponges of the sponges covering the chest tube.



9. Apply tape to create an occlusive dressing.



10. Anchor the proximal portion of the chest tube to the skin with 2" tape.

11. Date and time dressing. Document dressing change, condition of site, presence of drainage and any unusual occurrences on flowsheet.

