



## DEBRIDEMENT

### Wound Definition

Debridement is the removal of devitalized tissue and foreign matter from a wound. These materials support the growth of harmful organisms and may delay wound healing. Although debridement is generally beneficial, there are some patients and situations where debridement may be contraindicated..



### Goals

- Determine the most effective method of debridement.
- Remove devitalized tissue.



### Four Methods of Debridement

**NOTE:** The procedures listed above are guidelines. They are not meant to replace any existing protocols or institutional policies. The dressings used on these pages may not be covered under current Medicare reimbursement guidelines. Contact your local Sales Representative for more information

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## Four Methods of Debridement

### Autolytic Debridement:

The use of synthetic dressings to cover a wound and allow eschar to self-digest by the action of enzymes present in wound fluid.

### Enzymatic (Chemical) Debridement:

The topical application of proteolytic substances (enzymes) to break down devitalized tissue.

### Mechanical Debridement:

Removal of foreign material and devitalized or contaminated tissue from a wound by physical forces rather than by chemical (enzymatic) or natural (autolytic) forces. Examples are wet-to-dry dressings, wound irrigation, whirlpool, and dextranomers.

### Sharp Debridement:

Removal of foreign material or devitalized tissue by a sharp instrument such as a scalpel. Laser debridement is also considered a type of sharp debridement.

In certain situations, debridement may be contraindicated. Some examples include patients with arterial insufficiency or terminally ill patients with a shortened life expectancy. Areas with inadequate blood flow are also inappropriate for debridement. Dry eschar without signs of infection may also be left in place as an alternative treatment method. Consult a physician or wound care specialist for more information.

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### **Autolytic Debridement**

- Place a synthetic dressing over the ulcer and allow the eschar and necrotic tissue to self-digest through the action of natural enzymatic activity within the wound.
- Properly used, all synthetic dressings will debride through autolysis. Some of the more common examples are hydrocolloids such as ULTEC or ULTEC Pro, transparent film dressings such as POLYSKIN II, and amorphous hydrogels such as CURAFIL.
- This is a slower method of debridement, but it may be appropriate for patients who cannot tolerate other methods.
- This is a selective method. It will not harm healthy, granulating tissue.

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### **Enzymatic (Chemical) Debridment**

- Enzymatic ointments are applied directly to the wound surface. They break down and digest various devitalized tissues.
- This is a slower method of debridement.
- This is a selective method. Used as directed, it will not harm healthy, granulating tissue.
- Requires physician prescription.

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### **Mechanical Debridement**

- The most common method is wet-to-dry dressing. This refers to gauze placed into the wound (wet) and later removed (dry). After four hours, the wet gauze dries out and sticks to necrotic tissue in the wound. When removed, the necrotic tissue is also removed from the wound.
- This can be a faster method of debridement than enzymatic or autolytic.
- This is a non-selective method. Some amount of healthy, granulating tissue may be removed unintentionally with this method. This method may cause pain to the patient.

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### **Sharp Debridement**

- Only trained healthcare professionals should attempt this method. An accredited course and verification by a physician or trained healthcare professional is highly recommended.
- Single-use trays such as CURITY Laceration Trays or Suture Removal Kits provide sterile instruments for these types of procedures.
- This is the fastest method of debridement.
- This is generally a selective method. Necrotic tissue will usually be removed without harm to healthy, granulating tissue.
- When there are signs of advancing cellulitis or sepsis, consult a physician or wound care specialist as soon as possible.

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