

[Principle of IPC in Wound Care with Cheryl Frank Q&A – Thursday, 28 2021](#)

[Communique One – Friday, 29 October 2021](#)

1. Question: Coming from a hospital setting previously, I am surprised that my GP clinic use sterile dressing and wound care materials for multiple patients. For example: Chlorhex is opened for use, left over stored and used for other patients. Or large Jelonet packets opened and accessed in a sterile manner and then leftovers left in packet for next required use.

Wounds Australia recommends:

- Open the packet enough to remove the dressing using forceps and place it on the aseptic field
- Cut off the required portion without the scissor handles touching the dressing or the aseptic field
- Using forceps replace the remaining dressing in the packaging without touching the internal area of the packaging
- The open-but-unused dressing is stored in its original packaging
- Turn open end of packet over twice and seal with paper tape, or re-seal tube
- Write date of opening on packet or tube

- Chlorhexidine and Cetrimide Irrigation Solution is a sterile, yellow/orange solution and comes in a 30ml plastic Steritube. It is used for cleaning the skin and dirty wounds it is a single use item. However, if a larger bottle is kept in a sterile area in the treatment room it is acceptable to extract liquid using a clean syringe and taken to the patient's side and sterile dressing field.

- References: <https://www.woundsaustralia.com.au/publications>

2: Question: Can you process gauze and dressings

It is possible to sterilise gauze and dressings (referred to as porous items), however the density of the porous items and maximum size and mass of packs determines the ability of the sterilising agent (e.g., steam) to penetrate the load. Class B and some Class S sterilisers can sterilise porous items. If using a Class S steriliser, you will need to check it can sterilise these items. If porous items are sterilised in your practice, they should be positioned on their edge, if possible, to provide the least resistance for the passage of steam. The load must be validated first by your service provider. Consumable items such as gauze and cotton balls should be obtained sterile, directly from a commercial supplier.

- References: [AS/NZS 4815:2006, RACGP Infection Prevention and Control Standards \(5th edition, 2014, updated 2016\), Australasian Podiatry Council Infection Prevention and Control Guidelines for Podiatrists.](#)

Scan here to ask a question



3. Question: Can you perform wound care outside?

Wound management can be performed in most environments, but each clinician is responsible for utilising practices that are evidence based and maintain personal professional safety in following National and International guidelines and consensus documents. All clinical practices must be based on safety and quality.

- References: https://www.nfnn.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Wounds_Australia_Aseptic_Technique_2018.pdf

4. Question: What PPE should I be wearing to provide wound care or assist in a procedure?

Each Health Facility should determine what protocols and standards are required for the working environment to protect clinicians involved in wound management practices conducted within. The minimum expectation is gown, gloves, mask, and goggles. Each clinician is responsible for following employers' protocols.

- References: [National Health and Medical Research Council. Australian guidelines for the prevention and control of infection in healthcare. Canberra: NHMRC; 2010 \(accessed Sep 2017\).](#)

5. Question: Some dressings are expensive. Can we charge the patient because the practice won't pay for them?

This topic was discussed in the Medicare Benefits Schedule Review Taskforce. It has been previously illegal to charge for dressings when the GP bulk bills. Recommendations have been made to alter this, but I don't believe the decision has been ratified by the minister.

- References: [Medicare Benefits Schedule Review Taskforce Draft Report from the Wound Management Working Group. November 2019.](#)

