



How to take a wound swab

Single
Point
Lesson

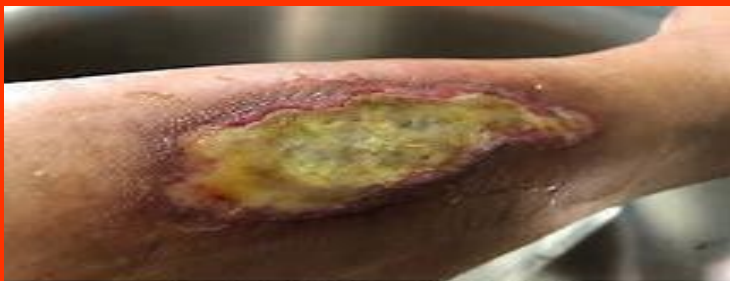
Indication for taking a wound swab

Clinical infection may be indicated when the following symptoms are observed:

1. Swelling
2. Redness
3. Heat
4. Purulent discharge, or increase in level of exudate
5. Wound deterioration
6. Change in appearance of tissue, e.g. normal granulation becomes dark and bleeds easily.
7. Systemic temperature

Equipment required

- Cotton tipped swab with transport medium (check the expiry date)
- Sterile saline
- Single use disposable apron
- Single use disposable non sterile gloves
- Microbiology Form with attached bag
- Approved Transport Container



Procedure for taking a wound swab

- Verbally confirm the identity of the patient by asking for their full name and date of birth.
- Explain procedure to patient including risks and benefits and gain valid consent.
- Decontaminate hands prior to procedure
- Apply single use apron and non sterile gloves
- Remove the dressing as appropriate
- The wound should be cleansed with sterile saline to irrigate any purulent debris
- Moisten the swab with sterile saline before taking sample.
- Use a “zig-zag” motion whilst simultaneously rotating between the fingers.
- Sample the whole wound surface.
- Place the specimen straight into the transport medium.

Post procedure

- On completion of the procedure, remove and dispose of PPE to comply with waste management policy
- Decontaminate hands following removal of PPE
- Ensure microbiology form contains relevant and specific information about the patient
- Document condition of wound and evidence of infection including clinical symptoms – any antibiotic treatment must be recorded
- Document all actions including arrangements for following up the wound swab results in the nursing records.
- Liaise with the GP as required
- Transfer culture swab specimen to the surgery in an approved transport Container
- **REMEMBER TO FOLLOW UP FOR RESULTS!**