

Caesarean Section Wound Care with a PICO 7 Dressing

You are being treated with PICO 7 Single Use Negative Pressure Wound Therapy. This system is used to reduce the incidence of post-operative wound complications. It consists of a negative pressure (or 'suction') dressing, which is connected to a small battery-operated pump (see picture below).



About your PICO dressing

Your PICO dressing will remain in place for seven days. The 'OK' light should be flashing green which indicates there are no problems with your PICO. You do not need to remove your PICO for any reason if the light is flashing green.

If there is an orange light flashing, this indicates a problem with your PICO and your dressing may need to be changed. Please call the St George's Maternity Helpline, number at the bottom of the leaflet.



Can I shower with a PICO dressing?

You can still shower with a PICO dressing and it is important that you do. However please follow the steps below to ensure the longevity of your PICO dressing.

1. Turn off the pump by pressing the orange button.
2. Twist the connection closest to the dressing to detach the pump from the tubing
3. Have a light shower, do not directly soak the dressing. Dry well afterwards.
4. Reconnect the pump.
5. Turn on the pump by pressing the orange button (it will vibrate for a few seconds before the OK button flashes green).

Please do not put the pump itself in the shower.

When do I remove my PICO dressing?

You can remove your dressing on Day 7 after your caesarean section. Please follow the steps below to correctly remove your PICO dressing.

1. Press the orange button to stop the pump therapy.
2. Disconnect the pump from the dressing
3. Gently peel off the dressing, starting with the outermost adhesive strips.
4. Dispose of the batteries within the pump.
5. Dispose of the dressing and pump in your normal household waste.

How do I care for my wound after I've removed my PICO?

It is preferable to shower instead of bathe. Soaking the wound for a long period of time can soften the scar tissue and inhibit healing. Use the shower head to clean the wound well with water then use a non-scented soap / body wash (Dove, Sanex or Simple) and let the soapy water gently wash over the wound. Do not put any bath or shower products directly onto the wound.

Afterwards, pat the wound dry with a clean towel until it is completely dry. Wounds are more likely to become infected if wet. Do not use toilet roll or tissue as the fibres can stick to the wound. Do not apply any talc, lotion or moisturiser to the wound whilst it is healing. Expose the wound to air every day to assist wound healing.

What are signs of infection?

Usually, patients who have had a PICO dressing do not experience problems with their wound healing. Sometimes, patients can develop a wound infection.

Signs of infection can include:

- Redness or new pain around the wound
- The wound leaking pus or other fluid

- An offensive smell coming from the wound
- Feeling generally unwell or having a temperature above 38 degrees C.

If you think your wound is infected call your GP or the Maternity Helpline, details at the bottom of the leaflet.

How do I look after my wound once it is healed?

Completed wound healing usually takes 4-6 weeks. A scar will be left once the wound has healed. The visibility of the scar differs from person to person and will continue changing over time. It will always be more fragile than it was before the operation so needs protection.

Scarred skin can be thick, lumpy, dry and itchy. To combat this, scar massage and moisturising can be started as soon as the wound is healed at six weeks. It is recommended that you massage the scar two to three times a day for 5-10 minutes each time to help soften it, to prevent skin breakdown and improve appearance.

Massage the scar with both circular and up and down movements. Use a non-perfumed moisturising cream or an emollient cream such as 50/50 paraffin or E45.

It is important to keep your scar away from direct sunlight. Scars are especially sensitive and can burn easily in the sun. We recommend that you always use a high factor sun cream on your scar when exposed in direct sunlight.

Useful sources of information

PICO negative pressure wound dressings for closed surgical incisions

www.nice.org.uk/guidance/mtg43

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your PICO dressing, please contact the Maternity Helpline on 020 8725 2777.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or care. You can contact the PALS team on the advisory telephone line Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 2pm to 5pm.

A Walk-in service is available:
Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 10am and 4pm
Friday between 10am and 2pm.

Please contact PALS in advance to check if there are any changes to opening times.

The Walk-in and Advisory telephone services are closed on Wednesdays.

PALS is based within the hospital in the ground floor main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings.

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS UK

The NHS provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones. **Tel:** 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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