

MEDICARE WOUND DRESSING GUIDE

The following are some specific coverage guidelines for individual products when the products themselves are necessary in the individual patient. The medical necessity for more frequent change of dressing must be documented in the patient's medical record and submitted with the claim (see Documentation section).

ALGINATE OR OTHER FIBER GELLING DRESSING (A6196-A6199):

Alginate or other fiber gelling dressing covers are covered for moderately to highly exudative full thickness wounds (e.g., stage III or IV ulcers); and alginate or other fiber gelling dressing fillers for moderately to highly exudative full thickness wound cavities (e.g., stage III or IV ulcers). They are not medically necessary on dry wounds or wounds covered with eschar. Usual dressing change is up to once per day. One wound cover sheet of the approximate size of the wound or up to 2 units of wound filler (1 unit = 6 inches of alginate or other fiber gelling dressing rope) is usually used at each dressing change. It is usually inappropriate to use alginates or other fiber gelling dressings in combination with hydrogels.

COMPOSITE DRESSING (A6203-A6205):

Usual composite dressing change is up to 3 times per week, one wound cover per dressing change.

CONTACT LAYER (A6206-A6208):

Contact layer dressings are used to line the entire wound; they are not intended to be changed with each dressing change. Usual dressing change is up to once per week.

FOAM DRESSING (A6209-A6215):

Foam dressings are covered when used on full thickness wounds (e.g., stage III or IV ulcers) with moderate to heavy exudate. Usual dressing change for a foam wound cover used as a primary dressing is up to 3 times per week. When a foam wound cover is used as a secondary dressing for wounds with very heavy exudate, dressing change may be up to 3 times per week. Usual dressing change for foam wound fillers is up to once per day.

GAUZE, NON-IMPREGNATED (A6216-A6221, A6402-A6404, A6407):

Usual non-impregnated gauze dressing change is up to 3 times per day for a dressing without a border and once per day for a dressing with a border. It is usually not necessary to stack more than 2 gauze pads on top of each other in any one area.

GAUZE, IMPREGNATED, WITH OTHER THAN WATER, NORMAL SALINE, HYDROGEL, OR ZINC PASTE (A6222-A6224, A6266):

Usual dressing change for gauze dressings impregnated with other than water, normal saline, hydrogel or zinc paste is up to once per day.

GAUZE, IMPREGNATED, WATER OR NORMAL SALINE (A6228-A6230):

There is no medical necessity for these dressings compared to non-impregnated gauze which is moistened with bulk saline or sterile water. When these dressings are billed, payment will be based on the least costly medically appropriate alternative, sterile non-impregnated gauze.

HYDROCOLLOID DRESSING (A6234-A6241):

Hydrocolloid dressings are covered for use on wounds with light to moderate exudate. Usual dressing change for hydrocolloid wound covers or hydrocolloid wound fillers is up to 3 times per week.

HYDROGEL DRESSING (A6231-A6233, A6242-A6248):

Hydrogel dressings are covered when used on full thickness wounds with minimal or no exudate (e.g., stage III or IV ulcers). Hydrogel dressings are not usually medically necessary for stage II ulcers.

Documentation must substantiate the medical necessity for use of hydrogel dressings for stage II ulcers (e.g., location of ulcer is sacro-coccygeal area). Usual dressing change for hydrogel wound covers without adhesive border or hydrogel wound fillers is up to once per day. Usual dressing change for hydrogel wound covers with adhesive border is up to 3 times per week.

SPECIALTY ABSORPTIVE DRESSING (A6251-A6256):

Specialty absorptive dressings are covered when used for moderately or highly exudative wounds (e.g., stage III or IV ulcers). Usual specialty absorptive dressing change is up to once per day for a dressing without an adhesive border and up to every other day for a dressing with a border.

TRANSPARENT FILM (A6257-A6259):

Transparent film dressings are covered when used on open partial thickness wounds with minimal exudate or closed wounds. Usual dressing change is up to 3 times per week.

WOUND FILLER, NOT ELSEWHERE CLASSIFIED (A6261-A6262):

Usual dressing change is up to once per day.

WOUND POUCH (A6154):

Usual dressing change is up to 3 times per week.

TAPE (A4450, A4452):

Tape is covered when needed to hold on a wound cover, elastic roll gauze or non-elastic roll gauze.

Additional tape is usually not required when a wound cover with an adhesive border is used. The medical necessity for tape in these situations must be documented. Tape change is determined by the frequency of change of the wound cover. Quantities of tape submitted must reasonably reflect the size of the wound cover being secured. Usual use for wound covers measuring 16 square inches or less is up to 2 units per dressing change; for wound covers measuring 16 to 48 square inches, up to 3 units per dressing change; for wound covers measuring greater than 48 square inches, up to 4 units per dressing change.

LIGHT COMPRESSION BANDAGE (A6448-A6450), MODERATE/HIGH COMPRESSION BANDAGE (A6451, A6452), SELF-ADHERENT BANDAGE (A6453-A6455), CONFORMING BANDAGE (A6442-A6447), PADDING BANDAGE (A6441):

Most compression bandages are reusable. Usual frequency of replacement would be no more than one per week unless they are part of a multi-layer compression bandage system. Conforming bandage dressing change is determined by the frequency of change of the selected underlying dressing.

GRADIENT COMPRESSION WRAP (A6545):

Coverage of a non-elastic gradient compression wrap (A6545) is limited to one per 6 months per leg. Quantities exceeding this amount will be denied as not medically necessary. Refer to Policy Article for statement concerning noncoverage if the ulcer has healed.