

Mosby's Nursing Video Skills

Procedure Guidelines for Collecting a Specimen for Wound Culture

1. Verify the health care provider's orders.
2. Gather the necessary equipment and supplies.
3. Perform hand hygiene.
4. Provide for the patient's privacy by drawing the bedside curtain or closing the door.
5. Introduce yourself to the patient and family, if present.
6. Identify the patient using two identifiers, such as the patient's name and birth date or name and account number, according to your agency's policy. Compare the identifiers on the medication administration record (MAR) with the information on the patient's identification bracelet, and/or ask the patient to state his or her name.
7. Before collecting a wound drainage specimen for culture and sensitivity testing, assess the patient for sign and symptoms of infection such as fever, chills and excessive thirst.
8. Ask him to rate his pain at the wound site.
9. Apply clean gloves. Remove the old dressing, and assess it for exudate and drainage. Fold the soiled sides of the dressing together, and dispose of it in the appropriate receptacle.
10. Remove your gloves and apply sterile gloves for assessment.
11. Assess the wound by looking for swelling, separation at the edges of the wound, inflammation and drainage.
12. Cleanse the area around the wound edges with an antiseptic swab, moving from the edges outward. Wipe away all of the old exudate.
13. Discard the swab, and remove and dispose of your soiled gloves in the appropriate receptacle. Perform hand hygiene.
14. Open the packages containing the sterile culture tube and dressing supplies. Apply a new set of sterile gloves.
15. **Obtain cultures:**
 - A. To obtain an aerobic culture:**
 - (1) Remove the swab from the culture tube, gently insert the tip of the swab into the wound in the area of fresh drainage, and gently rotate the swab. Return the swab to the culture tube.
 - B. To obtain an anaerobic culture:**
 - (1) Take the swab from the special anaerobic culture tube. Insert the swab deeply into the draining body cavity, and gently rotate the swab. Withdraw the swab and return it to the culture tube.
 - (2) Another method would be to insert the tip of a syringe, without a needle, into the wound and aspirate 5 to 10 mL of exudate. Then attach a transfer device to the syringe, expel all of the air, and inject the drainage into an anaerobic culture tube.
16. Regardless of which method you use, be sure to label each specimen tube and verify information in front of the patient.
17. Make a notation on the label if the patient is receiving antibiotics.

18. Place the specimen in a bio-hazard bag. Remove your gloves and dispose of them properly.
19. Perform hand hygiene.
20. Apply clean or sterile gloves as appropriate, and clean the patient's wound as required by the health care provider's order.
21. Open the dressing supplies and cover the wound with a new sterile dressing. For more information refer to the skill video "Changing a Dressing."
22. Remove and dispose of the used gloves and soiled supplies in the appropriate receptacle, according to your agency's policy. Perform hand hygiene.
23. Help the patient into a comfortable position, and place toiletries and personal items within reach.
24. Send the specimen to the laboratory immediately.
25. Place the call light within easy reach, and make sure the patient knows how to use it to summon assistance.
26. To ensure the patient's safety, raise the appropriate number of side rails and lower the bed to the lowest position.
27. Leave the patient's room tidy.
28. Document and report the patient's response and expected or unexpected outcomes. As part of your follow up care, review the culture and sensitivity test results when they come back from the lab.