



**TITLE:** Use of Single-Use Sterile Dressings from a Previously Opened Package in the Community Setting: Safety, Harms, and Guidelines

**DATE:** 14 June 2012

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the evidence on the safety and harms of using single-use sterile dressings from a previously opened package, on the same patient, in a community setting?
2. What are the evidence-based guidelines and recommendations for using single-use sterile dressings from a previously opened package, on the same patient, in a community setting?

## KEY MESSAGE

One relevant non-randomized study was identified regarding the use of single-use dressings from a previously opened package in a community setting was identified.

## METHODS

A limited literature search was conducted on key resources including PubMed, EBSCO CINAHL, The Cochrane Library (2012, Issue 5), University of York Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (CRD) databases, Canadian and major international health technology agencies, as well as a focused Internet search. No filters were applied to limit the retrieval by study type. Where possible, retrieval was limited to the human population. The search was also limited to English language documents published between January 1, 2002 and June 5, 2012. Internet links were provided, where available.

The summary of findings was prepared from the abstracts of the relevant information. Please note that data contained in abstracts may not always be an accurate reflection of the data contained within the full article.

**Disclaimer:** The Rapid Response Service is an information service for those involved in planning and providing health care in Canada. Rapid responses are based on a limited literature search and are not comprehensive, systematic reviews. The intent is to provide a list of sources of the best evidence on the topic that CADTH could identify using all reasonable efforts within the time allowed. Rapid responses should be considered along with other types of information and health care considerations. The information included in this response is not intended to replace professional medical advice, nor should it be construed as a recommendation for or against the use of a particular health technology. Readers are also cautioned that a lack of good quality evidence does not necessarily mean a lack of effectiveness particularly in the case of new and emerging health technologies, for which little information can be found, but which may in future prove to be effective. While CADTH has taken care in the preparation of the report to ensure that its contents are accurate, complete and up to date, CADTH does not make any guarantee to that effect. CADTH is not liable for any loss or damages resulting from use of the information in the report.

**Copyright:** This report contains CADTH copyright material and may contain material in which a third party owns copyright. **This report may be used for the purposes of research or private study only.** It may not be copied, posted on a web site, redistributed by email or stored on an electronic system without the prior written permission of CADTH or applicable copyright owner.

**Links:** This report may contain links to other information available on the websites of third parties on the Internet. CADTH does not have control over the content of such sites. Use of third party sites is governed by the owners' own terms and conditions.

## RESULTS

Rapid Response reports are organized so that the higher quality evidence is presented first. Therefore, health technology assessment reports, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses are presented first. These are followed by randomized controlled trials, non-randomized studies, and evidence-based guidelines.

One relevant non-randomized study regarding use of single-use sterile dressings from a previously opened package, on the same patient, in a community setting was identified. No relevant health technology assessment reports, systematic reviews, meta-analyses, randomized controlled trials, or evidence-based guidelines were identified. Additional references of potential interest are provided in the appendix.

## OVERALL SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The included non-randomized study examined wound supplies in the home-care setting at seven and 14 days after opening the packaging.<sup>1</sup> Wound care supplies began to show bacterial colonization at the seven day examination and those colonies were large enough to be potentially harmful to some patients at the 14 day examination. No relevant evidence-based guidelines were identified.

## REFERENCES SUMMARIZED

### Health Technology Assessments

No literature identified.

### Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses

No literature identified.

### Randomized Controlled Trials

No literature identified.

### Non-Randomized Studies

1. Zwanziger PJ, Roper S. Bacterial counts and types found on wound care supplies used in the home setting. *J Wound Ostomy Continence Nurs.* 2002 Mar;29(2):83-7.  
[PubMed: PM11901416](#)

### Guidelines and Recommendations

No literature identified.

### PREPARED BY:

Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health

Tel: 1-866-898-8439

[www.cadth.ca](http://www.cadth.ca)

**APPENDIX – FURTHER INFORMATION:**

**Recommendations – methods of unknown rigour**

2. A health care guide for nursing staff: care of wound equipment and dressing field [Internet]. Coburg North (AUS): Connected Wound Care; 2011 Sep [cited 2012 Jun 5]. Available from: [www.grhc.org.au/component/docman/doc\\_download/277-cwc-equipment-care-print-version?Itemid=264](http://www.grhc.org.au/component/docman/doc_download/277-cwc-equipment-care-print-version?Itemid=264)

**Additional References**

3. Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society (WOCN) Wound Committee, Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology, Inc. (APIC) 2000 Guidelines Committee. Clean vs. sterile dressing techniques for management of chronic wounds: a fact sheet [Internet]. Wound Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society; 2011 [cited 2012]. Available from: [http://www.wocn.org/resource/resmgr/files/clean\\_vs\\_sterile\\_dressing\\_te.pdf](http://www.wocn.org/resource/resmgr/files/clean_vs_sterile_dressing_te.pdf)
4. Alqahtani M, Lalonde DH. Sterile versus nonsterile clean dressings. Can J Plast Surg [Internet]. 2006 [cited 2012 Jun 5];14(1):25-7. Available from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2539027>  
[PubMed: PM19554226](#)
5. Poole M, Coughlan A. Use of sterile dressing packs: challenging tradition. Nurs Times. 2002 Jun 18;98(25):59-60.  
[PubMed: PM12168229](#)