Changing a Dressing

After surgery, your wound may have been covered with a dressing (bandage). Your doctor may instruct you to change this dressing. Your doctor will also tell you how often to change it. Follow these steps:

1. **Wash your hands**
   - Use an antibacterial soap.
   - Wash vigorously for 30 seconds.

2. **Prepare your workspace**
   - Find a clean area where you can set up your supplies. Make sure there are no pets nearby.
   - Lay a clean towel over the area.
   - Lay out your supplies. These should include:
     - Clean dressing
     - Other:

3. **Remove the old dressing**
   - Slowly lift the edges of the dressing or tape. If the dressing sticks to the wound, soak the edges with adhesive remover.
   - Carefully discard the old dressing in a plastic trash bag and tie it closed.
   - Wash your hands again. If someone helped you remove the dressing, they must wash their hands also.

4. **Clean the incision**
   - Open your supplies. Keep them inside their packages.
   - Gently clean any drainage surrounding the incision. Do NOT scrub the incision.

5. **Cover the incision**
   - Place the dressing over the entire incision.
   - Gently press the dressing around the edges to seal it, or tape it in place.

6. **Wash your hands again.**

**When to call for help**

Call your healthcare providers if:
- Your incision is getting more red
- Your incision is getting more tender
- You see pus (green or yellow fluid) in the incision
- The incision smells bad
- You have a fever over 101° F (38° C)
- Your incision continues to drain more fluid than the dressing can absorb