

## **Changing Your Xeroform Dressing**

### *Information for Plastic Surgery patients*

*This handout for Plastic Surgery patients at Harborview Medical Center explains how to change a Xeroform dressing.*

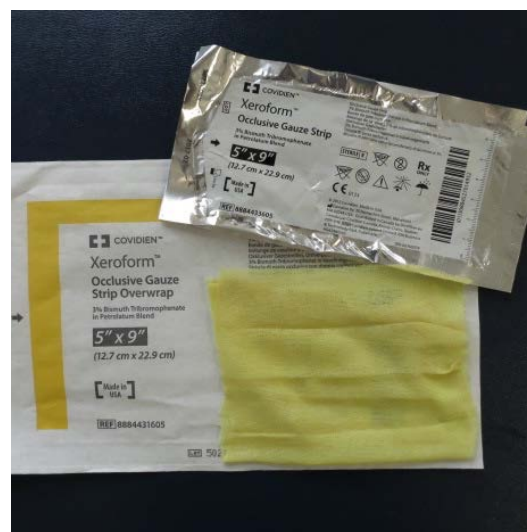
### **What is Xeroform dressing?**

Xeroform is a yellow gauze dressing. It is often put on open wounds and skin grafts to help keep them moist.

Your doctor will tell you how often to change your dressing. This is usually once a day.

### **Before You Start**

- If you need pain medicine, take it 30 to 40 minutes before you change your dressing.
- When you are ready to change your dressing, wash your hands with soap and water.
- Open a foil package of Xeroform. Cut a piece that is large enough to fully cover your wound. If you do not use the entire piece of Xeroform, put the rest back in the package to use another day. Seal the package inside a clean plastic bag.
- Leave the new piece of Xeroform resting on a clean countertop, towel, or foil package while you remove the old dressing and wash your wound.
- If your doctor told you to apply ointment to the Xeroform:
  - Put a moderate amount of ointment on one side of the gauze and spread it around. Common ointments are Bacitracin, Bactroban, and Triple Antibiotic Ointment.
  - When you place the Xeroform on your wound, make sure the side with ointment is against your skin.



*Xeroform is a yellow gauze dressing that comes in a foil package.*

## Changing the Dressing

- Remove the old dressing.
- Gently wash your wound with soap and water. You can use a soapy washcloth at the sink or use soap and water when you take a shower.
- If your water comes from a well, do a final rinse with bottled water. Gently pat your wound dry.
- Next, place the Xeroform on your wound. Hold it in place with a dry bandage such as a gauze wrap or a gauze pad and tape.
- Repeat these steps as often as your doctor has told you.

## How long should I use the dressing?

Stop using Xeroform when your doctor tells you to, or when your skin is healed. Healed skin is pink and dry without any fluid draining from it.

## When to Call

Call one of the numbers listed under “Who to Call” below if you have one of these signs of infection:

- Fever higher than 100.4°F (38°C)
- More pain
- A bad smell
- Green-yellow drainage from your wound
- Pus (milky-cloudy drainage) from your wound
- More redness of the skin around your wound
- New or an increase in drainage or re-opening of a healed incision

## Who to Call

### Questions or Concerns

If you have any questions or concerns, call the Burn/Plastic Surgery Clinic at 206.744.5735. The clinic answers calls weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

### Urgent Needs

If you have an urgent care need after hours or on a weekend or holiday, call the Community Care Line nurse at 206.744.2500.

### Questions?

Your questions are important. Call one of the numbers below if you have questions or concerns.

Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., call the Burn/Plastic Surgery Clinic: 206.744.5735

After hours and on weekends and holidays, call the 24-hour nurse at the Community Care Line: 206.744.2500