WARD DRESSING TECHNIQUE FOR USE WITH CENTRAL SUPPLY

BY

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Central supply of sterilized packaged instruments and dressings is rapidly replacing the preparation of such materials in hospital wards. With central supply, instruments and dressings are delivered to the ward in packets, and the Central Department is responsible for the cleansing, packing, and sterilization of the used instruments. The elimination of sterilization of instruments in the ward entails a change in ward dressing technique when the central supply system is introduced. Instruction in the new procedure becomes necessary during the change-over period and also at frequent intervals in institutions where trainee nurses or medical students are undertaking ward work. Routine teaching of the method is done by demonstration and supervision, but we have found it helpful to have a step-by-step diagram of the basic technique permanently on view in ward dressing-rooms and demonstration theatres. The accompanying diagrams illustrating this technique are reproduced photographically and are mounted on a stout backing (28 by 16 in. : 70 by 40 cm.) suitable for wall display.

The method illustrated here is devised for a single-pack technique for standard procedures. It is based on the St. Bartholomew's Hospital manual of nursing procedures, and on valuable advice we have received from Dr. V. D. Allison, Director of the Musgrave Park Central Sterile Supply Department. The technique ensures handling of instruments and dressings without the use of Cheatle's forceps, and provides for the separate disposal of soiled dressings and used instruments. The bags containing the latter are placed in a box and held ready for collection by the Central Department. Special procedures such as catheterization, lumbar puncture, etc., have appropriate packs, but the basic layout and disposal technique remain unaltered.

The illustrations were drawn by Mr. Peter Cull, medical artist, St. Bartholomew's Hospital Medical College, and have been reproduced by the Department of Photography, St. Bartholomew's Hospital. We would like to thank the Matron for her advice.

BASIC PROCEDURE

1
Sponge trolley top with Sudol 1%, using a minimum of solution so that the shelf is dry within a few seconds. This must be done immediately before procedure is to be carried out.

2
* Put required pack on top shelf of trolley, * supplementary packs on lower shelf, and proceed to bedside.

3
At bedside, open pack bag, remove pack and small bag containing handling forceps. Clip empty pack bag to right side of trolley * ready for soiled dressings. The pack * should be left unopened in centre of top shelf.

4
Prepare the patient—loosen strapping or bandage, etc.

Wash and dry hands.

Return to the bedside and place handling forceps * (in their bag) at the lower right edge of top shelf. Open pack, * using fingers and picking up corners of paper only.

Pick handling forceps out of bag * without touching contaminated top of bag with forceps blades. Put bag open into bowl on bottom shelf ready to receive the used instruments.

Arrange equipment, using handling forceps. Put "kleenex" tissue at lower right border of sterile field. * This serves to mark the handling area of the sterile field. If instruments are put down during the procedure, the handles only should be put on the tissue.

Remove soiled dressing with handling forceps and discard these forceps into bag on lower shelf.

When dressing is completed, put all instruments, gallipots, etc., into bag on lower shelf and screw up bag top. Roll up sterile field paper and any dressings left over, put into soiled dressing-bag, and screw up the top.

Push trolley from the ward, depositing soiled dressing-bag in the sluice-room disposal unit.

Leave bag of used equipment in the C.S.S.D. box in the clean utility room.
N.B.—The tops of the bags should be closed before leaving the bedside.