



The VAC or vacuum assisted closure device, is a treatment modality that we apply to various wounds and graft treatment plans to markedly increase the success of wound healing and graft take. The vacuum assisted closure device applies negative pressure to the wound, pushing the gauze down into the wound or on top of a graft, whether that be skin graft, Integra or the like, until its effect is obtained. This is also why it is known as negative pressure wound therapy or NPWT. In open wounds the VAC dressing change is performed every 12 – 48 hours depending upon the nature of the wound. The more contaminated or infected the wound is, the more frequently the dressing will need to be changed, even up to every 12 hours but most frequently every day. Once the wound becomes more stabilized and less infected (colonized), then 48 hour dressing change regimens are instituted and sometimes a little bit longer. What this does is create a perfect wound environment for the body to heal the wound and hopefully avoid greater problems.

The VAC is also employed very effectively in the treatment of skin grafting and acellular grafts such as Integra. The negative pressure that is applied to a graft recipient site on top of the graft providing continuous firm pressure to the split thickness skin graft, full thickness skin graft, Integra or Alloderm graft, such that it has a better chance of a 100% contact, and therefore greater. It markedly increases the likelihood of graft take. In this application the VAC is left on top of the skin graft for a period of 5 days up to 2 weeks without disturbance so as to promote blood supply to these tissues. The dressing change is typically decided by the physician or whoever is overseeing the patient. Changing the VAC more frequently will cause graft loss and slough failure ultimately.

There is another application used in NPWT (VAC). This is when a wound has been closed with drains and the VAC is placed on top of the closed or semi-closed wound with drains running back out into the granula foam sponge of the VAC to which negative pressure is applied. This can also be left anywhere from 1 – 3 weeks until this wound has been permitted to close down and heal adequately. At this point the sponges can be removed and the drains either left or removed at the time, depending upon the situation.

The important point is that the VAC is used in different treatment modalities and depending upon what is being done, the VAC will be changed every 12 hours up to every 2 – 3 weeks. So it is important that you understand what is being done and what the doctor has told you so that the VAC is not prematurely disturbed, leading to graft failure or wound failure.

	<u>Duration</u>	<u>Negative Pressure</u>	<u>Pattern</u>
<u>Skin Grafts</u>	5-7 days	125-150mmg	continuous
<u>Integra</u>	2-3 weeks (at 2-3 days Dr. Crofts will do initial check)	125-150mmg	continuous
<u>Closed Wounds</u>	1-2 weeks	150mmg	continuous
<u>Open Wounds</u>	1-2 weeks	125-150mmg	continous

Dr. Crofts may adjust any above parameters to fit the circumstances.

***** ALWAYS BRING YOUR V.A.C. SUPPLIES WITH YOU TO THE OFFICE VISIT SO WE CAN DO V.A.C DRESSING CHANGES**

If you are not sure what do to or have any other questions please call our office at 801-785-8825.