20.1: Wound Care Introduction

Learning Objectives

• Assess tissue condition, wounds, drainage, and pressure injuries
• Cleanse and irrigate wounds
• Apply a variety of wound dressings
• Obtain a wound culture specimen
• Use appropriate aseptic or sterile technique
• Explain procedure to patient
• Adapt procedures to reflect variations across the life span
• Recognize and report significant deviations in wounds
• Document actions and observations

Wound healing is a complex physiological process that restores function to skin and tissue that have been injured. The healing process is affected by several external and internal factors that either promote or inhibit healing. When providing wound care to patients, nurses, in collaboration with other members of the health care team, assess and manage external and internal factors to provide an optimal healing environment.

Complex wounds often require care by specialists. Certified wound care nurses assess, treat, and create care plans for patients with complex wounds, ostomies, and incontinence conditions. They act as educators and consultants to staff nurses and other healthcare professionals. This chapter will discuss wound care basics for entry-level nurses. Request a consultation by a certified wound care nurse when caring for patients with complex or nonhealing wounds.