

Photography of Wounds & Ostomies

(NOTE: 'Patient' refers to patient, resident or client in this document)

Site Applicability

PHC: all sites

Practice Level

Basic Skill: NP, RN's, LPN's, RPN, OT's, PT's

Requirements

- Use of email and texting to communicate personal and confidential information, including any photos, must be done in compliance with the email policy and email guidelines, or the texting policy.
- The patient/family member must be informed of the purpose for the photo i.e. assessment, care planning, or evaluation and monitoring of treatment plans; and must **verbally consent** prior to taking photos. Written consent is not required.
- Photos may be taken on a PHC- issued digital camera or mobile devices.
 - If photo is taken on a personal mobile device the photo must be emailed to the staff's PHC email address. No other identifying information should be included in this email. The photo can then be forwarded from the PHC email address and include applicable patient information in the body of the email.
 - Do not include any identifiable information in the text itself. Patient data and/ or interventions must be communicated via a telephone call or email.
- Where available, staff must use a PHC email address to conduct PHC business. Email addresses issued by another health organization or trusted institution may also be used, based on where the staff member primarily works.
- Photos must be placed within the patient record.
- All photos must be deleted from all devices after they have been placed within the patient's record and/ or successfully forwarded to the appropriate health care professional. This includes deleting all patient information from photo folders, SD/ memory cards, email inbox/sent/ deleted folders, text feeds, the cloud or other linked devices.

Need to Know

- Out of Scope: forensic evidence, images of fractures, non-wound related injuries.
- Photography for wound and ostomy management should only occur when:
 - requested by the most responsible person (MRP) or PHC Nurses Specialized in Wound, Ostomy and Continence (NSWOC) Team for assessment or monitoring when MRP/ NSWOC Team cannot be present at time of dressing change

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- unexpected deterioration of wound/ ostomy occurs when the MRP is not immediately available to assess on-site
- Unless requested by MRP or NSWOC Team, photography of wounds and ostomy is not required for:
 - maintenance, non-healable wounds or stable chronic wounds
 - new simple and uncomplicated wounds
 - stable ostomy with no complications
- Photos of wounds and ostomy should only be taken by health care team members directly involved in the patients care.
- Clinical Support Clerks or health care members not directly involved in the patients care may assist with downloading images; however, the actual email/ text messages must be composed and managed by a health care team member directly involved in the patient's care.
- **All photos that are taken must be placed into the patient's record.** The health care staff that is initiating the photography or sending the patient information via email or text must ensure copies are placed in the patient record. The receiver of the information (in most cases the NSWOC) is not responsible for ensuring the images are placed in the chart. See: [Procedure: Documenting Photos in Patient Records](#)
- All photos must be deleted from PHC-issued computers and all mobile devices after they have been placed within the patient's record and/ or successfully forwarded to the appropriate health care professional.
 - Digital cameras – ensure the photos are deleted from SD/ memory cards.
 - Mobile devices: ensure the photos are deleted from photo folders, email inboxes/sent/deleted folders, text feeds, the cloud or other linked devices.
 - PHC computers: ensure photos are deleted from shared or personal drives, desktops, and email inboxes/ sent/ deleted folders.

Procedures

[Procedure: Taking the Photo\(s\)](#)

[Procedure: Documenting Photos in Patient Records](#)

[Procedure: Communication of Photos to other Health Care Professionals](#)

Equipment and Supplies

- Sterile paper measurement tape or non- sterile measurement tape.
- Linen or appropriate supplies to use for draping
- Dressing supplies
- Hand sanitizer
- Wound dressing supplies

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Procedure: Taking the Photo(s)

STEPS:
1. Remove dressing and cleanse wound as per routine protocols; nurse removes gloves, performs hand hygiene prior to handling device.
2. Write the date on a disposable wound ruler/ measuring Q-tip and place it next to the wound or ostomy.
3. Cover body parts and identifying features (e.g. face, tattoos, etc.) with drapes so that only the wound or ostomy is visible.
4. Position the device's lens parallel to the plane of the wound 1 to 3 feet away. Multiple pictures may be required to image the entire wound and peri-wound area.
5. Check photo and repeat if needed to ensure photograph is of good quality and clarity before re-application of new dressing.
6. Wipe device with approved disinfectant e.g. Cavi-Wipe, prior to placing back in container/clean bag.
7. Follow infection control precautions with device equipment.

Procedure: Documenting Photos in Patient Records

- All photos taken for clinical purposes must be documented within the patient record.
- A clearly labelled copy of the photo may be kept in the "Treatment" Binder or chartlet for reference. Printed copies of the photos that are stored in the Treatment Binder or chartlet must be disposed of in confidential bins when no longer clinically relevant.

STEPS:
1. Transfer photo(s) to a PHC computer that is connected to a printer which is located in a secure location nearby. If using a mobile device: <ul style="list-style-type: none">I. Email photo to PHC email account.II. Open photo(s).III. Print photo(s).IV. Delete photo(s) from PHC computer and mobile device as per Procedure: Destruction of Photos, Emails and Text Messages.

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If using a PHC-issued digital camera:

- I. Attach camera to PHC computer.
- II. Download photo(s) temporarily to folder on the PHC computer.
- III. Print photo(s).

Delete photo(s) from PHC computer and digital camera as per [Procedure: Destruction of Photos, Emails and Text Messages](#).

2. If applicable, send email with photos attached. See [Procedure: Communication to other Health Care Professionals](#).

3. All photos and patient information must be deleted from PHC computer. See [Procedure: Destruction of Photos, Emails and Text Messages](#).

4. Print out Wound Consult and Treatment Plan (WCTC) from Cerner FormFast.

5. Place (tape or glue) all photos onto the WCTC. Ensure the photo does not cover the bar code.

6. The photo must not be altered. The nurse may write on the printed image or WCTC form.

7. The completed WCTC must then be filed in the patient record (chart or chartlet).

Procedure: Communication of Photos to other Health Care Professionals

- If it is necessary to electronically (email or text) send photos to other Health Care Professionals ensure:

If Texting:

- Texting can only be used to send photos.
- Do not include any identifiable information in the text itself.
- Patient data and/ or interventions must be communicated via a telephone call or email.
- Use only the vendor-provided Short Message Service (SMS) or Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS). This refers to the “normal” Text Messaging service provided by the standard enterprise or consumer telecommunications service providers i.e. Bell, Rogers, Telus, etc.

Do not use third party applications like Whatsapp, Facebook, or iMessage that store data outside of Canada.

Steps:

1. Authenticate the correct recipient prior to texting photo.
2. Text photo(s).
3. Document photo(s) in patient record. See [Procedure: Documenting Photos in Patient Records](#).

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4. Upon verification of receipt of photo from sender, photo(s) must be deleted. See [Procedure: Destruction of Photos, Emails and Text Messages](#).

If Using Email:

- PHC Email account can be used to communicate patient data.
- Do not include patient identifiers in the subject line of the email.
- Patient identifiers and confidential information may be communicated in the body of email.

STEPS:

1. Download photo to PHC computer. See [Procedure: Documenting Photos in Patient Records](#)
2. Send email (including information outlined above) to MRP or NSWOC Team (phcwoundostomyteam@vch.ca) from mobile device and PHC computer.

Unless otherwise indicated, all emails must include:

- *Subject line title:* Wound/ Ostomy Care Photograph from '*fill in the facility*'
- *Body of Email:*
 - patients initials
 - patients room number or MRN
 - full assessment (or verify that assessment data has been entered into Cerner)
 - current protocol
 - any suggestions/ recommendations

3. Document photo(s) in patient record. See [Procedure: Documenting Photos in Patient Records](#).
4. Upon verification of receipt of photo from sender, photo(s) must be deleted. See [Procedure: Destruction of Photos, Emails and Text Messages](#).

Documentation

- Using site specific system (interdisciplinary notes, nurses' notes, case notes, electronic medical record), document:
 - All discussions, conversations or communications regarding wound assessment, care plans, patient concerns etc.
- All photos that are taken on a unit must be printed and stored with a patient record using the Wound Consult and Treatment Plan. See: [Procedure: Documenting Photos in Patient Records](#)

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Patient and Family Education

- Explain to the patient and family the indications and rationale for taking and communicating the photograph to the health care team

Related Documents

- British Columbia *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA)
- Policy [B-00-11-10171](#) - Acceptable Use of Information Technology
- Policy: [B-00-11-10165](#) - Cellular Phone and Blackberry Devices
- Policy [BD-00-1-40000](#) - Emailing (Regional VCH-PHC)
- Policy [B-00-11-10169](#) - Texting
- Policy [B-00-11-10108](#) - Information Privacy & Confidentiality
- Policy [B-00-11-10120](#) - Managing Privacy Breaches
- BCCNP [Privacy and Confidentiality Standard](#) for Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners

Definitions

“Chartlet” refers to the small bedside patient-specific binder that is allocated for individual patients within acute or rehabilitation units where Cerner electronic documentation is standard.

“Patient” refers to anyone receiving care or services from PHC including assisted living tenants.

“Confidential Information” means all information, other than personal information, that is specifically identified as confidential or is reasonably understood to be a confidential nature that staff receive or have access to through PHC.

“Device” means an asset that remotely connects to and accesses corporate information and resources. This includes, but is not limited to, smartphones (e.g. BlackBerry’s, Android devices, and iPhones), tablets, laptops, computers or PDAs.

“Email” or **“Electronic Mail”** means messages sent and received electronically using VCH or PHC IT facilities. Attachments to emails are considered part of the email.

“Family” or **“Family Member”** is defined by the patient. When the patient is unable to define family, the patient’s next of kin or substitute decision maker provides the definition. Family members are the people who provide the primary physical, psychological, or emotional support for the patient. Family is not necessarily blood relatives.

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“Personal Information” means any information about an identifiable individual including, but not limited to: clients, patients, residents, volunteers, students, staff, physicians, or members of the public. Personal information does not include business contact information, such as a person's title, business telephone number, business address, email or facsimile number. Personal information can include financial identifying information, such as a credit card, social insurance, bank account numbers or similar information that identifies an individual's financial account or record.

“Staff” means all employees (including management and leadership), medical staff (including physicians, midwives, dentists and nurse practitioners), residents, fellows and trainees, health care professionals, students, volunteers, contractors, researchers and other service providers engaged by PHC.

“Treatment Binder” refers to the large binder used in long term care facilities by RNs that contains treatment information for residents.

“Wound” - a physical injury to the body consisting of a laceration or breaking of the skin or mucous membrane, or an opening made in the skin or a membrane of the body incidental to a surgical operation or procedure.

Appendices

[Appendix A](#) – Wound Consult and Treatment Plan form

Appendix A: Wound Consult and Treatment Plan: Form ID 3568

WOUND CONSULT AND TREATMENT PLAN



Wound Care Treatment
Plan

Place Patient Form Label Here

File in ID Notes section of patient chart.

Date form completed: _____

Assessment data, goal of wound care, treatment plan

Signature: _____

Printed name: _____

Contact No: _____

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Executive Director, Patient Safety & Quality Improvement and In-House Counsel

Practice Consultant, Professional Practice Office

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Director Information Access and Privacy

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