Supporting Documentation
On Wound Irrigation Methods

Wound Irrigation

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Wound irrigation may have one or several of the following aims:

- removal of foreign bodies
- reduction of pathogen numbers
- removal of blood, clot and dead tissue
- removal of free cancer cells
- moistening of tissue

The solution used to irrigate may be:

- physiological saline; its low osmolarity may aid in free tumour cell lysis
- topical antiseptic, e.g. chlorhexidine and iodine; both may cause undesirable cell death of host tissue. Alternatives include spraying dry povidone-iodine spray onto the wound - this has been shown to reduce infection rates - or local injection of antibiotic peroperatively.

If an antiseptic is chosen, it must not stain the skin. Irrigation may be carried out with a rubber bulb syringe, low pressure or high pressure systems. Evidence suggests that a simple high pressure system, e.g. a fine jet of fluid from a needle attached to a large syringe, is far superior to low pressure alternatives.