

# Wound: debridement

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[Introduction](#) | [Requirements](#) | [Preparation](#) | [Procedure](#) | [Aftercare](#) | [Outcomes](#)

## Introduction

- Removal of dead, damaged or infected tissue to improve the healing potential of the remaining healthy tissue.

### Uses

- Removal of damaged tissue and contaminants.
- Improve vascularity of wound edges.
- Decrease bacterial numbers.

### Time required

#### Preparation

- Minutes.

#### Procedure

- Minutes.

### Decision taking

#### Criteria for choosing test

- Devitalized tissue.
- Necrotic tissue.
- Debris.

## Requirements

### Materials required

#### Minimum equipment

- Scissors.
- Scalpel handle.
- Thumb forceps.
- Hemostat.

#### Ideal equipment

- Laceration pack.

#### Minimum consumables

- Scalpel blade.
- Lavage equipment [Wound: lavage](#) .

## Preparation

### Site preparation

- Wound.



# Procedure

## Approach

### Step 1 - Reduce contamination

- Clean area around wound using aseptic technique [Wound: preparation](#) .
- Clean hands using aseptic technique.
- Wear sterile gloves.

## Core procedure

### Step 1 - Remove contaminated and devitalized tissue

- Use a scalpel blade working from one end of wound to the other. Begin at the wound surface and progress into the depths of the wound, layer by layer.
- Excise all non-viable or necrotic tissue.
- Trim skin flaps.
- Remove a thin margin of skin.
- Control hemorrhage.

## Exit

### Step 1 - Lavage wound

- See Wound: lavage [Wound: lavage](#) .

# Aftercare

## Immediate Aftercare

### Special precautions

- Avoid large blood vessels, nerves, tendons and joint capsules.

## Long term Aftercare

### Follow up

- Multiple debridements and lavage often necessary.

# Outcomes

## Complications

- Damage to large blood vessels, nerves, tendons and joint capsules during debridement.
- Extensive exploration may break down fascial barriers and spread infection.

## Reasons for treatment failure

- Poor aseptic technique.
- Inability to distinguish viable and non-viable tissue (may not be obvious until later).

# Further Reading

## Publications

### Refereed Papers

- Recent references from [PubMed](#) and [VetMedResource](#).
- Quinn G (2010) **Equine practice: management of large wounds in horses**. *In Pract* 32 (8), 370-381 [VetMedResource](#).

