



# Ohio Board of Nursing

www.nursing.ohio.gov

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## Interpretive Guideline

**Title:** Registered Nurse Performance of Conservative Sharp Wound Debridement

The Wound Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society defines conservative sharp wound debridement as the removal of loose avascular tissue without pain or bleeding (1996). This definition is used for purposes of this Interpretive Guideline.

### Guidelines for Conservative Sharp Wound Debridement

Removal of loose avascular (necrotic) tissue without pain or bleeding from a dermal ulcer using scissors, or other sharp dissecting device, may be within the scope of registered nursing practice if the following guidelines are observed (section 4723.01(B), Ohio Revised Code (ORC)):

- A. With a valid order from an authorized provider, the registered nurse may perform conservative sharp wound debridement. An authorized provider is an individual who is authorized to practice in this state and is acting within the course of the individual's professional practice.
- B. In executing a nursing regimen, the registered nurse should perform the following activities:
  1. Wound assessment;
  2. Patient monitoring before, during and after the debridement procedure;
  3. Evaluate wound healing after the procedure;
  4. Communicate any changes in patient status to the appropriate health care provider.

### **A registered nurse should not:**

1. Engage in activities that constitute the practice of medicine and surgery in Ohio;
2. Independently execute a regimen of conservative sharp wound debridement;
3. Perform conservative sharp wound debridement in an employing facility/institution that does not maintain policies concerning registered nurse performance of conservative sharp wound debridement.

Considerations in Performing Conservative Sharp Wound Debridement (Rule 4723-4-03, Ohio Administrative Code, (OAC))

1. The registered nurse providing care to patients by performing conservative sharp wound debridement should maintain documentation of his/her acquisition of education, demonstrated competency, and other documentation that ensures practice is guided by the employing facility/institutional policies and procedures.
2. The registered nurse's education/training and demonstrated competence should include, but is not limited to, the following:
  - a. Anatomy and physiology pertaining to tissue and structures affected by wounds and ulcers;
  - b. Indications, contraindications, and potential complications related to conservative sharp wound debridement.
  - c. Pharmacology pertaining to medications utilized in debridement.
  - d. The registered nurse's technical skill in performing conservative sharp wound debridement.
  - e. Patient care responsibilities during conservative sharp wound debridement including, wound assessment, monitoring the patient before, during, and after the procedure, patient comfort, use of universal precautions and other measures to prevent infection/contamination, and other nursing care responsibilities as defined and approved in employer/institutional policy.

**Accountability and Responsibility of Nurses**

Section 4723.01(B), ORC defines the scope of practice for the registered nurse. Rule 4723-4-03, OAC holds registered nurses responsible for maintaining and demonstrating current knowledge, skills, abilities, and competence in rendering nursing care within their scope of practice.

The registered nurse must apply the Nurse Practice Act (Chapter 4723, ORC) and rules regulating the practice of nursing (Chapters 4723-1 to 4723-27, OAC) to the specific practice setting. Further, the registered nurse must utilize good professional judgment in determining whether or not to engage in a given patient-care related activity, consistent with the law, rules, and guided by the Board's Decision-Making Model. It is critical to note that the law and rules require that the licensee provide nursing care only in circumstances that are consistent with one's education, experience, knowledge, and demonstrated competency.

In this statement, the Board does not announce a new policy but instead gives licensees specific instructions regarding their obligations under existing law and rules.

Licensees should also review the following:

Section 4723.01(B), ORC  
Section 4723.151, OAC  
Rule 4723-4-03, OAC  
Rule 4723-4-06, OAC  
Rule 4723-4-07, OAC

The Nurse Practice Act and administrative rules are available for review and download from the Board website: [www.nursing.ohio.gov](http://www.nursing.ohio.gov) in the Law and Rules section.

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