

PICO dressings for Caesarean birth



Target audience	Maternity staff
Patient group	Pregnant women undergoing Caesarean birth

Summary

This guideline summarises the pre-operative and intra-operative (see appendix 1) and post-operative (see appendix 2) recommendations surrounding the use of the PICO dressing in maternity patients undergoing caesarean birth.

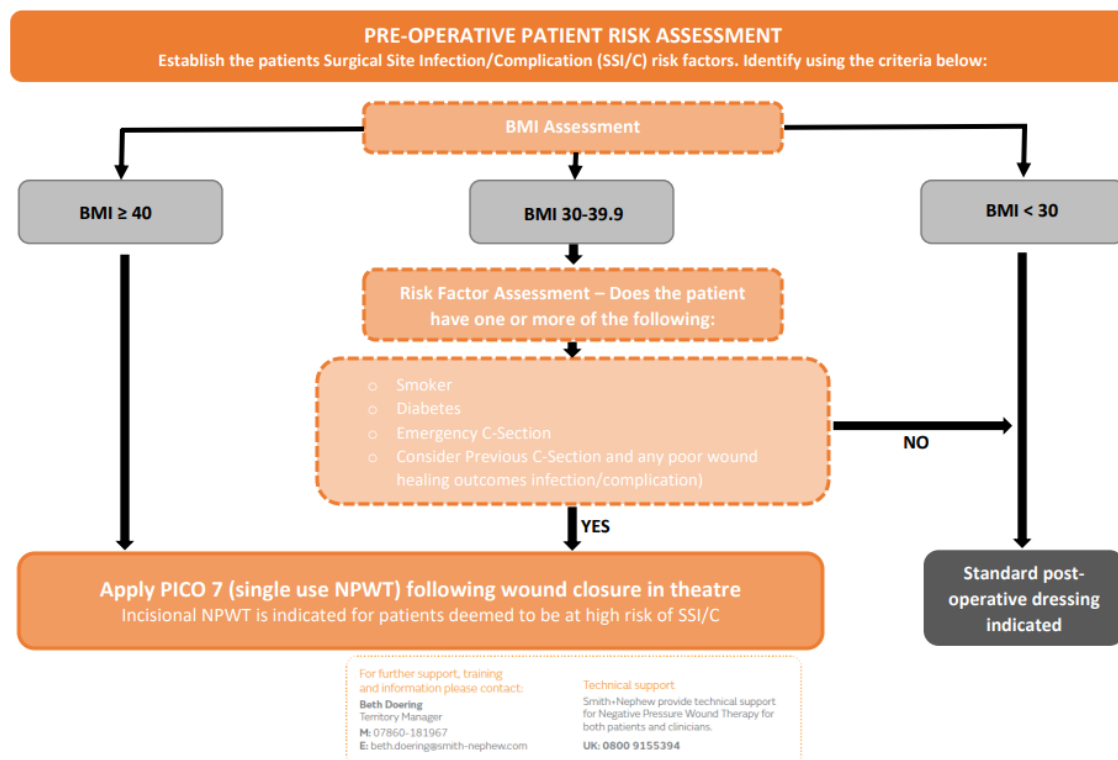
The decision to use a PICO dressing over a standard post-operative dressing should be made by the operating clinician.

Patient demographics making its use more likely include the following:

- BMI of 30 or more
- Smoking status
- Diabetic status
- Type of caesarean birth (elective vs. emergency)
- Poor previous wound outcomes (infection/other complication)

Appendix 1 – pathway for Caesarean birth – surgical wound

Pathway for Obstetrics (Caesarean Section) Surgical Wounds



THIS PATHWAY DOES NOT EXCLUDE CLINICAL JUDGEMENT. IF A PATIENT IS AT RISK OF WOUND BREAKDOWN, THEN NPWT SHOULD BE USED
PICO C-Section Pathway (April 2025)

Lead author	E Jarvie	Date approved	13/8/25
Version	1	Review date	13/8/28

Appendix 2 – pathway for Caesarean birth – ongoing care

Pathway for Obstetrics (Caesarean Section) Surgical Wounds – Continuing Care

THEATRES – Application Guidance

- ✓ Before starting PICO – To aid dressing application/achieving a seal, apply appropriate skin protection/barrier to peri-wound area and ensure area surrounding the incision is dry prior to application. Note: PICO is suitable for use with any type of wound closure method.
- ✓ Apply PICO 7 in theatres (as per the product IFU) – Use appropriate size and shape of PICO dressing kit. Write the date on the back of the pump, insert the batteries, and attach belt clip.
- ✓ In the following order: 1. Apply Dressing, 2. Connect to Assembled Pump, 3. Press Orange Button, 4. Ensure device is operating and a good seal is achieved (only green 'OK' light flashing) and 5. Apply the Fixation Strips around the border of the dressing.
- ✓ Give patient the remaining Fixation Strips and Instructions for Use (IFU)

Signs of Clinical Infection

- Erythema, swelling, localised pain or tenderness
- Temperature above 38°C
- Increased exudate levels
- Increased heat at the wound site
- Malodour
- Positive organism on wound swab

Postoperative guidance – Review, Assess and Onward Referral

- ✓ The PICO dressing should remain in place for the recommended 7-day therapy period and should only be removed if there is suspicion of wound infection – see grey box for signs of infection. Note: The dressing should be left in situ until day 7, unless there is a clinical need/rationale to remove the initial dressing, in which case a second PICO dressing should be applied for the remainder of the therapy period. Early dressing removal should only occur for the following clinically relevant reasons:
 - Saturated or leaking dressing
 - Excessive bleeding
 - Suspected local/systematic infection (e.g. local wound pain, redness, swelling)
 - Potential dehiscence
- ✓ All patients should be monitored for signs of Surgical Site Infection (SSI) and signs of sepsis until full wound closure. Should an SSI be suspected by the presence of cellulitis, either by a new infection or an infection caused by treatment failure, you should:
 - Obtain relevant swab samples for culture and sensitivity testing.
 - Treat the wound infection as per Health Board microbiology guidance, then PICO should be reapplied.
 - Monitor for systemic signs of infection.
- ✓ Monitor PICO 7 dressing daily for amount of "strike through" and to ensure device is operating correctly:
 - If 'AIR LEAK' light appears (orange) check bungs are tight and that the dressing is sealed. If dressing has lifted, appropriately apply additional fixation strips.
 - If 'DRESSING FULL' light appears (orange) or dressing "staining" has reached the port, before/up to day 7 post-application, please consult surgical team for assessment.

POST DISCHARGE – Patient information and discharge planning

Patients will have been given the relevant written information (both general post-op guidance & PICO specific guidance) pre-operatively. Ensure patient has access to this information and where needed provide a PICO Patient Information Leaflet

Pump expires on day 7 – Pump and dressing should be removed as per surgeon guidance.

If the incision is dry and the wound has completely closed upon removal, PICO 7 can be discontinued. If the incision is still oozing, or there are any signs of infection, then this should be referred and reviewed by the relevant team.

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Version	1	Review date	13/8/28

Clinical governance

Lead author:	E Jarvie
Current responsible author:	E Jarvie
Endorsing body:	Maternity Clinical Effectiveness Group
Version number:	1
Approval date:	13/8/25
Review date:	13/8/28

Consultation/distribution record	
Contributing authors:	E Jarvie
Consultation process:	Obs group and maternity CEG
Distribution:	All in maternity

Change record			
Date	Lead author	Change	Version
13/8/25	E Jarvie	Original guideline	1

Lead author	E Jarvie	Date approved	13/8/25
Version	1	Review date	13/8/28