

## Larvae Therapy

### What is Larval Therapy?

Larval therapy, also known as 'Maggot therapy' involves the use of specially bred sterile larvae from the greenbottle fly, which are applied to a wound to remove dead or infected tissue. The larvae of the greenbottle fly are safe to use and the treatment has a long and successful history.

### How does it work?

Larvae do not have teeth so they do not bite or chew.

The larvae physically feed on dead tissue. They release special chemicals into the wound which break down the dead tissue into a liquid form that they can easily remove and digest. During feeding the bacteria are destroyed within their gut.

### How are they applied?

The larvae are sealed within a net pouch called a Biobag, containing a small piece of foam, which aid the growth of the larvae and manage wound fluid. The BioBag dressings are placed in the wound and stay covered with a pad or bandage throughout the treatment.

Larval therapy can be applied in your home, in any healthcare facility or outpatient clinic.

### How big are the larvae?

The larvae that are applied to your wound are very small.

During the treatment they will increase in size to a maximum of 12mm.

### How long does the treatment last?

BioBag dressings can be left in place for up to four days; it is possible for the outer dressings to be removed on a daily basis to allow wound inspection.

It is difficult to predict how long the treatment will take. Sometimes a wound is completely cleansed by a single application of larvae but other wounds may require two or more treatments.

### Will I notice anything different during larvae therapy?

During larvae therapy you may notice some of the following:

- The wound may become a little wetter or have shown a dark red or pink discharge. This can look like blood but it is due to the action of the larvae breaking down the dead tissue.
- A wound that contains a lot of dead tissue will develop a smell during treatment. This is due to the activity of the larvae and should disappear when the dressing is changed.
- Most people are unaware of the larvae's presence, although a small number of patients claim that they can feel a tickling sensation.
- Some patients, particularly those with poor circulation report that their wounds become more painful during larval therapy, if you experience any increase in pain ask the nursing staff for advice on pain relief.

## Information for Patients

---

### Will larvae burrow into healthy tissue?

The larvae will not attack or burrow into healthy tissue, they only remove dead tissue.

### Will the larvae multiply in my wound?

The larvae cannot reproduce or multiply within the wound.

### Precautions whilst undergoing larvae therapy

Please avoid:

- Getting your dressing wet
- Bathing or showering as the larvae may drown
- Sitting too close to a heater as the larvae require a moist wound environment and may dry out
- Putting direct pressure on your wound as this may damage the larvae. Try not to walk or sit on your wound when the larvae are in place

### How will they be removed?

The larvae Biobag will be removed intact.

There will be very little wound cleansing required as the chemicals produced by the larvae will continue to work within the wound

Other sources of information used were accessed via – [www.biomonde.com](http://www.biomonde.com)

### Queries

If you have any queries or concerns speak to:

- The member of staff who applied the larvae for advice
- The Tissue Viability Service if you are an inpatient on the relevant site.
- The Podiatry Department if you are known to them on extension 0121 3716419
- The Vascular CNS if you are known to them on 0121 3714901

### BioMonde

Units 2–4 Dunraven Business Park,  
Coychurch Road, Bridgend, CF31 3BG  
United Kingdom  
Telephone: +44 (0) 845 230 1810  
Facsimile: +44 (0) 1656 668 047  
Email: [enquiries@biomonde.com](mailto:enquiries@biomonde.com)  
[www.biomonde.com](http://www.biomonde.com)

If you require this information in another format, such as a different language, large print, braille or audio version please ask a member of staff or email [patientexperience@uhb.nhs.uk](mailto:patientexperience@uhb.nhs.uk).