GUIDELINES FOR THE PRESCRIBING,
APPLICATION &
DISPOSAL OF POTASSIUM PERMANGANATE SOAKS

FOR USE BY: Doctors, Independent Prescribers and registered nurses

Rationale: To ensure the safety of patients and staff. Contact with the Permitabs® tablets can cause burning of the skin and ingestion can cause death. Nursing staff should follow the instructions for dilution, application and disposal carefully.

Prescription: 1:10,000 which equates to 1 Permitab® tablet dissolved in 4 litres water (BNF, 2014). Prescriber or registered nurse caring for patient to review treatment at day 5, if treatment has not worked adequately in the meantime.
All treatment must be documented as “POTASSIUM PERMANGANATE SOAKS” i.e. in the skin care plan and on the prescription chart.

Dilution
The nurse preparing the solution should wear gloves, eye protection and an apron at all times as the solution causes burning and staining to skin, clothing and equipment.
N.B. Take care in preparation of the solution as Potassium Permanganate stains floor surfaces and carpets permanently.
1. Place One Permitab® in an empty sterile specimen pot, and fill it with 20mls of hand hot water. Replace the lid securely.
2. Shake the pot repeatedly until the tablet has dissolved. This can take about 10 minutes.
3. Line a bucket or bowl with a plastic waste bag as potassium permanganate causes staining of containers (do not use large yellow sharps containers).
4. Fill a lined bowl or bucket with 4 litres of warm water.
5. Pour the contents of the specimen pot into the lined bowl or bucket.
6. Add more water to the tablet in the specimen pot if there is any portion of the tablet left undissolved and shake repeatedly until fully dissolved. Add this solution to the 4 litres of solution.
7. Dispose of the specimen pot in clinical waste.
8. The 1:10,000 solution should be transparent rose pink/purple or claret coloured.

Application
Method 1: for use with lower legs or hands only
1. Smear Vaseline / yellow soft paraffin on all nails that will be in contact with the solution or paint nails with nail varnish.
2. The patient should place the affected limb(s) in bowl (one bowl for each limb) (do not use large yellow sharps containers).
3. If the solution does not reach above the area to be treated the patient / nurse should irrigate the area with the solution or use gauze swabs as per point 4 method 2.
4. Immerse the area for 10-15 minutes.
5. Use clean water to remove the solution from the skin, using an emollient as a soap substitute if required.
Do not use any soap or detergent as it will react with the potassium permanganate and give off an unpleasant odour.
6. Check the skin for irritant reactions immediately after treatment.
7. Review daily and stop treatment in 5 days. A medical review may be required if identified improvement has not taken place.
8. If no improvement, review with your Tissue Viability Link Nurse or contact the Tissue Viability Live Line for advice (phone 07733264059 advice line)

Version 6 - 01.7.15
Method 2: any affected area

1. Lie the patient on a couch / bed / chair which is covered with waterproof sheeting.
2. Smear Vaseline / yellow soft paraffin on all nails that will be in contact with the solution or paint nails with nail varnish.
3. Soak gauze swabs in the potassium permanganate solution, gently wring out and apply to all areas requiring treatment, adding further solution to the swabs if necessary.
4. Leave in place for 10-15 minutes (15 maximum – although some oxidation takes place earlier with this method)
5. Remove the gauze swabs from the skin.
6. Use clean water to remove the solution from the skin, using an emollient as a soap substitute if required.
   **Do not use any soap or detergent as it will react with the potassium permanganate and give off an unpleasant odour.**
7. Check the skin for irritant reactions immediately after treatment.
8. Review daily and stop treatment after 5 days. A medical review may be required if identified improvement has not taken place.
9. If no improvement, review with your Tissue Viability Link Nurse or phone Tissue Viability Live Line for phone advice 07733264059

**Storage**

Community Hospitals, Residential & Nursing Homes

1. Permitabs® should be stored in a locked EXTERNAL medicines storage cupboard in the relevant clinical area
2. **Not** to be stored with cleaning fluids
3. **Not** to be stored in oral medicines cupboards, bedside medicine cabinets, or medicines trolley

Patient’s Home

1. Provide patient with a Southern Health patient information leaflet
2. Keep out of site and reach of children, pets and vulnerable patients
3. Store in a cool, dry, well ventilated place, in securely closed original container.
4. Store away from sources of heat or ignition.

**Disposal**

1. Dispose of solution in the toilet. The dilute solution will not stain the toilet.
2. Flush the toilet twice.
3. Dispose of the specimen pot in clinical waste.

**N.B. Potassium Permanganate is very toxic to aquatic organisms and should not be allowed to enter the drinking water supply, waste water or soil.**

On completion of treatment any remaining tablets must be returned to a community pharmacy for safe disposal.

*It is recommended contact is made with your local water authority or Health & Safety department to ensure authorisation for disposal methods.*

Always ensure all relevant actions are documented