Potassium permanganate
Information for you
Your doctor or nurse has prescribed potassium permanganate solution to treat your skin condition. This leaflet describes how to prepare the solution using Permitabs® tablets and also give you information on how to use the solution.

Please follow the instructions carefully.

**You will need:**

- Permitabs® tablets – your family doctor (GP) can prescribe these for you, or you can contact your community pharmacist.
- 500ml polypropylene bowl and plastic bucket marked to 8 litres – available from the Pharmacy department, University Hospital Ayr or Dermatology Unit, University Hospital Crosshouse.

**To make up the solution:**

- The solution should be prepared in the most practical area in the house – for example over tiles or linoleum flooring with polythene bags placed under and around the bucket to protect the floor. Be aware that when the solution is prepared in the bucket it can be heavy.
- The potassium permanganate will stain the bucket so line it with a plastic bag.
- Place the 500ml bowl into the large bucket. Place one potassium permanganate tablet 400mg (Permitabs®) into the bowl and make up to the very top of the bowl (500ml) with warm water (not boiling water). The tablet will take a few minutes to dissolve. You can help the tablet dissolve by stirring the solution with your hand. Make sure you wear gloves when you do this.
• Once the tablet has completely dissolved, carefully pour the concentrated solution from the bowl into the bucket that it is sitting in. Then remove the bowl from the bucket.

• Now add warm water to make the liquid up to 8 litres in the pre-marked bucket.

• Mix the liquid with your hand (wearing a glove) to make sure the colour is evenly distributed. You should be able to see the bottom of the container through the solution. The final solution should be warm to touch.

• Remove a small amount of the solution using the bowl and make sure that the final colour is light pink. If the solution is dark pink, discard it and start again.

Directions for use of the diluted solution:

• Permitabs® tablets will stain skin, furnishings, ceramic basins and flooring.

• It is important that only the affected area(s) comes into the contact with the potassium permanganate solution where possible. If necessary, any excess diluted solution should be removed from the container before you immerse your hand/leg/feet. Apply yellow soft paraffin to your nails and nail beds before you soak them to prevent staining.

• To treat your hands and feet - soak them in the solution for 10 minutes twice a day. Discard the solution after each treatment. You can treat an ulcer or weeping area in one of two ways:

  a. Soak a gauze swab in the solution and apply to the wound for 10 minutes. Make sure the swabs are continually moistened to stop them from drying out.

  or

  b. Immerse the affected area in the diluted solution for 10 minutes. It is important that if you are soaking your hands or feet in the solution that they are totally immersed to make sure they are all covered.
• You may experience slight stinging or irritation, however if this becomes more intense remove the area from the potassium permanganate solution and rinse with plenty of running water.
• You should stop treatment if your skin becomes dry.
• Take care to avoid spillages.

**Accidental spillage:**

• Mop up the spillage with a suitable cloth. If you spill the solution on carpet or furnishings, try to remove as soon as possible. Wrap and dispose of the cloth by carefully placing it in a household waste bin.
• Wash the area with plenty of water.

**Disposing of solution:**

• Dispose of any excess solution down the toilet or an external drain. Take care not to splash any solution.
• Make sure the bowl and bucket are left clean and dry. Discard them at the end of your treatment course.

**Storing tablets:**

• Store the Permitabs® tablets in a safe (preferably locked), cool, dry and dark cupboard. Make sure you keep them out of reach of children. Preferably away from other medicines and food.
• Return any unused or out-of-date tablets to your community pharmacist for disposal.
Cautions for using potassium permanganate solution (Permitabs®):

- Do not use the solution if you have a known hypersensitivity to potassium permanganate.
- The tablets and prepared solution should not be taken by mouth, as they are for external use only.
- Keep the tablets and prepared solutions away from the eyes and mucous membranes and out of reach of children.
- Potassium permanganate is a dye, which can stain so keep the tablets and prepared solution out of contact with clothing, fabrics, ceramic basins and baths.
- If the solution is not prepared as stated and is made too strong, it may stain skin and nails and damage your skin.

Important safety information:

- Never swallow potassium permanganate. However, if you do swallow any tablets or solution, wash out your mouth with water, drink plenty of fluids – for example, water or milk and seek medical advice immediately from your nearest Accident and Emergency department.
- If the prepared solution gets into your eyes, wash your eyes with cold water for 10 to 15 minutes and seek medical advice.
- If the prepared solution splashes onto your skin, remove any stained clothing and wash the affected areas with soap and water in a well-ventilated area. If your skin has been exposed to the solution for any length of time, seek medical advice.
- If you accidentally breathe in potassium permanganate, get some fresh air and seek medical advice. Avoid contact with naked flames.
Further information

If you need any more information while using potassium permanganate please contact:

Dermatology Day Unit
Heathfield Suite
University Hospital Ayr
Telephone: 01292 616825

Dermatology Day Unit
Ward 2E
University Hospital Crosshouse
Telephone: 01563 827923
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Last reviewed: June 2017
Leaflet reference: APH07-001-GD
PIL code: PIL17-0313

Compiled by: Potassium permanganate short life working group 2011 See ADTC 34(a)/2 for details