

## Potassium Permanganate topical solution

### What is this leaflet about?

This leaflet has been written to help you understand how to use potassium permanganate soaks (Permitabs® or EN-Potab®), which are diluted in a large volume of water for applying to the skin.

### What is Potassium Permanganate?

Potassium permanganate is a chemical which, when diluted, works as a mild antiseptic and astringent (something that dries the skin). It is for external use only. This means that it should only be used on the outside of your body and must never be put in the mouth or swallowed.

Potassium Permanganate is supplied as permitab soak tablets which should be dissolved in large volumes of water and used as a soak for the skin.

**They should not be swallowed, but used diluted in water on the skin**

### Important safety advice:

1. Potentially fatal if swallowed.
2. The tablets must be stored away from children and vulnerable adults.
3. Potassium permanganate must be diluted in water before use.
4. Always wear disposable, protective gloves when handling potassium permanganate to avoid staining or irritation of the skin.

### Why would I need to use Potassium Permanganate?

Potassium permanganate is used on the skin as an antiseptic. Skin conditions commonly treated with potassium permanganate soaks include weeping or blistering conditions such as acute weeping/infected eczema and leg ulcers.

### What are the alternatives?

Your doctor or nurse will discuss alternatives with you, depending on previous therapies and the condition being treated. Sometimes potassium permanganate may be the best therapy.

### What are the potential risks and side effects?

- Dryness of the skin.
- Can cause irritation or burns if the dilution is not adequate.
- Contact with eyes and mucous membranes (inside of mouth, nose, ear, genitals, and anus) may cause irritation and should be avoided.
- Harmful if swallowed – may cause significant side effects. If swallowed, seek medical help immediately.
- Potassium permanganate is a dye and will stain clothing, fabrics, and ceramic basins.

## How will I be monitored for the side effects of potassium permanganate soaks?

The healthcare professional giving the treatment will assess your skin before and after treatment. If you are treating yourself and or assisted by a carer, and you have concerns, contact the healthcare professional who prescribed the treatment.

## What to do if you accidentally swallow potassium permanganate or get it into your eyes

Potassium permanganate can be extremely harmful if swallowed. If you accidentally swallow the tablet or solution, drink a small glass of milk or water, and seek immediate medical help at your nearest accident and emergency department or ring 999. If you accidentally get potassium permanganate in your eyes, try not to rub or keep them closed. Wash your eyes straight away with plenty of water for at least 15 minutes, remove any contact lenses and contact NHS 111 immediately.

## How to use Potassium Permanganate soaks.

How to use potassium permanganate safely? The solution should be freshly prepared just before use, as, if left it will start to oxidise and go brown. Wearing disposable, protective gloves, use a clean container, lined with a clean white bin liner bag. This will allow you to see the colour of the water when potassium permanganate is diluted with water. Fill the lined container with 4 litres of warm tap water and add one tablet of Permitabs® or EN-Potab® - allow the tablet to dissolve completely in the water. The colour of the water should be light pink.

Apply petroleum jelly (for example Vaseline®) to the finger or toenails to prevent staining if they are going to be exposed to potassium permanganate solution. If treating the extremities (hands and feet), they may be soaked in diluted potassium permanganate solution. If treating a larger part of the body and limbs, the solution may be poured into a bath. If treating a localised area such as under the breasts or in the groin, gauze swabs may be soaked in the diluted solution and applied to those areas. Treat the affected areas for 10-15 minutes and then pat dry with a clean towel. The solution may be disposed of in the household drain if the treatment is being given at home. Potassium permanganate solution may stain containers and baths, showers, and wash basins, and irritate the skin, so they should be cleaned thoroughly after use.



**Diluted potassium permanganate soak solution**

## How should the treated area be cared for?

Once the affected area has been soaked and dried, apply any prescribed cream/ointment and or dressings, and repeat as recommended by your healthcare professional

## What should I do before using these soaks?

You should read any information given to you before using the soaks. Each soak tablet should be thoroughly diluted in water before use. Usually each 400mg (1:1,000) tablet is diluted in four litres of water to give a dilution of 1:10,000 (0.01%). But your doctor or nurse will tell you how much to dilute each Permitab soak tablet. Ensure you store the Permitab soak tablets in a safe place out of the reach of children and in a place where they will not be mistaken for tablets you would swallow.

## Should I be worried about using these soaks?

If you are still worried after reading this leaflet, please talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. They are looking after you and have thought carefully about the best medicine for you

## If I'm confused what should I do?

Talk to the person who gave you this leaflet (usually your doctor, nurse or pharmacist). Ask them to explain.

## Consent

Although you consent for this treatment, you may at any time after that withdraw such consent. Please discuss this with your medical team.

## Sources of information

Further information can be obtained from:

- Your Hospital Doctor or Consultant
- Medicines Information East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust 03001315539
- Pharmacy Department, East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust
- Your Nurse
- NHS 111
- Your GP
- Your Local Pharmacy

## Important information

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

## Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the Patient Experience Team – Tel: 0300 131 4731 (direct dial) or by email at: [esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net](mailto:esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net)

## Hand hygiene

The Trust is committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

## Other formats

If you require any of the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department.

Tel: 0300 131 4434 Email: [esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net](mailto:esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net)

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

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## Reference

British Association of Dermatologists. Patient information leaflet: Potassium permanganate. This version written by: Jane Starr, Medication Safety Officer

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:

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