

chapter 7

Suppositories and pessaries

Overview

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

- understand how to prepare suppositories and pessaries extemporaneously
- know how to calibrate a suppository/pessary mould
- perform percentage and displacement value calculations during the preparation of suppositories and pessaries
- select an appropriate container in which to package suppositories and pessaries
- prepare an appropriate label for suppositories and pessaries.

Introduction and overview of suppositories and pessaries

Suppositories

British Pharmacopoeia (BP) definition (suppositories):

Suppositories are solid, single-dose preparations. The shape, volume and consistency of suppositories are suitable for rectal administration.

They contain one or more active substances dispersed or dissolved in a suitable basis which may be soluble or dispersible in water or may melt at body temperature. Excipients such as diluents, adsorbents, surface-active agents, lubricants, antimicrobial preservatives and colouring matter, authorised by the competent authority, may be added if necessary.

Pessaries

Common ingredients for inclusion in pessaries for local action include:

- antiseptics
- contraceptive agents
- local anaesthetics
- various therapeutic agents to treat trichomonal, bacterial and monilial infections.

Definition

Suppositories are solid unit dosage forms suitably shaped for insertion into the rectum. The bases used either melt when warmed to body temperature or dissolve or disperse when in contact with mucous secretions. Suppositories may contain medicaments, dissolved or dispersed in the base, which are intended to exert a systemic effect. Alternatively the medicaments or the base itself may be intended to exert a local action. Suppositories are prepared extemporaneously by incorporating the medicaments into the base and the molten mass is then poured at a suitable temperature into moulds and allowed to cool until set.

Definition

Pessaries are a type of suppository intended for vaginal use. The larger-size moulds are usually used in the preparation of pessaries such as 4 g and 8 g moulds. Pessaries are used almost exclusively for local medication, the exception being prostaglandin pessaries that do exert a systemic effect.