

safety equipment (e.g. face masks, gloves) may also be required. It is the responsibility of the individual compounder to assess the risk posed by any pharmaceutical ingredient and to ensure that the correct safety equipment is in use. Similarly, long hair should be tied back and hands washed, ensuring any open cuts are covered.

- **Clean work area and equipment.** The cleanliness of the work area and equipment used during the compounding procedure is of paramount importance. The risk of contaminating the final product with either dirt or microorganisms from the surroundings or from ingredients from a previous preparation can be considerable if attention is not paid to the cleanliness of the work area and equipment. Before starting to compound a product, the work area and equipment should be cleaned with a suitable solution (e.g. industrial denatured alcohol (IDA), formerly known as industrial methylated spirits (IMS)), which must be allowed to dry fully.
- **Work area.** In addition to the cleanliness of the work area, consideration needs to be given to the work area itself to ensure that it is suitable for its intended purpose. Both lighting and ventilation need to be adequate. Some pharmaceutical ingredients are highly volatile and so, if the ventilation within the work area was inadequate, this could cause problems for the compounding staff.
- **Label preparation.** The label for any pharmaceutical product must be prepared before starting the compounding procedure. This will enable the product to be labelled as soon as it has been manufactured and packaged. This will eliminate a situation where an unlabelled product is left on the bench and would reduce the possibility of the product being mislabelled and given to the wrong patient.
- **Weighing and measuring procedure.** During weighing and measuring, unless strict guidelines are followed, it can be very easy to mix up different pharmaceutical ingredients as many ingredients resemble each other. It is preferable to incorporate a weighed or measured ingredient into a product as soon as possible to prevent any accidental switching. If this is not possible, when weighing or measuring more than one ingredient, place each on a piece of labelled paper as soon as it has been weighed or measured. This will avoid any accidental cross-over of ingredients.