

Medical Gel: Safe Use and Storage

Purpose

To provide a guideline for the safe use and storage of medical gels which includes ultrasound gels, lubricating gels and other medicated gels.

Site Applicability

This guideline is applicable to all Medical Imaging (MI) departments within Fraser Health (FH), Providence Health Care (PHC), Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) and Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH).

Practice Level

Profession:	Responsibilities:
All MI staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comply with the guideline for handling sterile gels Comply with the guideline for handling non-sterile gels Adhere to the guideline for warming of gels Store the Ultrasound and Medical gels as outlined

Need to Know

This guideline is based on the national guideline on [Medical Gel](#) issued by Infection Prevention and Control Canada (IPAC) and on [Practice Guidelines](#) issued by Sonography Canada.

Guideline

Sterile Medical Gels

- Single use packaging is required
- The opened package must be discarded at the end of the procedure
 - Sterile Gels **must** be used for:
 - All procedures involving a sterile or aseptic environment
 - All invasive procedures where a device is passed through tissue (eg: needle localization, needle aspiration, etc)
 - All procedures involving non-intact skin
 - Neonates
 - Sterile Gels **should** be used for:
 - Procedures performed on intact mucous membranes (eg: esophageal, gastric, vaginal, rectal)
 - Patients with immunodeficiency's or who are on immunosuppressive therapy

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Non-Sterile Medical Gels

- When a new bottle is opened, it should be dated and discarded after one month
- Care must be taken to avoid contaminating the gel by aseptically removing and replacing the cap
- Tips of containers must not come into direct contact with a patient, staff or instrumentation
- Multi-dose containers of non-sterile gel must be sealed when not in use
- Multi-dose containers should be discarded when empty and never refilled [1]. Non-sterile gel containers must never be topped up (i.e. refilled when partially empty) [1].

Warming of Medical Gels

- Non-sterile must not be warmed because of the increased risk of bacterial multiplication in the non-sterile gel [1] [3]
- Sterile gel may be warmed

Storage of Medical Gels

- Gel must be stored in clean areas and protected from potential sources of contamination such as dust, moisture, insects, etc.
- If evidence of contamination is present or package integrity has been breached, the product must be discarded.
- Gel bottles and packets should be rotated when restocking takes place

Exception

At the discretion of the medical leader of the modality or department, deviations to these guidelines are permitted to accommodate certain patients. For example, it may be necessary to use warmed gel to calm a neonate or child during an examination.

References

1. Infection Prevention and Control Canada Position Statement, Medical Gels. https://ipac-canada.org/photos/custom/Members/pdf/21May_Medical_Gels_Position%20Statement_Final.pdf
2. Sonography Canada- Professional Practice Guidelines and Policy Statement for Canadian Sonography. <https://sonographycanada.ca/app/uploads/2019/11/PPGuideline-and-Policies-Sept-2018-FINAL.pdf>
3. Oleszkowicz, S.C., Chittick, P., Russo, V., Keller, M.S., Sims, M., Band, J., "Infections Associated with Use of Ultrasound Transmission Gel" (2012):33 (12): 1235-1237
4. College of Physicians & Surgeons of BC, Diagnostic Accreditation Program. <https://www.cpsbc.ca/accredited-facilities/dap/accreditation-standards-DI>

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	1.0	09-OCT-2018	Initial release MIUS18-1114-01	Brent Barton
	2.0	12-DEC-2023	Write guideline into SHOP format and assign SHOP number Addition of practice level table Removal of subscripts Update reference links	Catherine Lo, US&Echo RPL

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