

Using PolyMem[®] dressing

Radiotherapy Department Information

PolyMem is a soft, absorbent dressing with moisturising and wound cleansing properties.

It is helpful to use when you have a broken area on your skin, due to radiotherapy. It will provide the right conditions for your radiotherapy skin reaction to heal.

PolyMem dressing will work to protect the delicate skin, absorb discharge, provide comfort and minimise pain.

Instructions for use

- Wash your hands and clean the area with cooled boiled water, then leave to dry or pat gently with a clean towel.
- If the wound is dry and not 'oozing', moisten the dressing before applying it with a small amount of cooled boiled water. This moisture stimulates the moisturising properties to start working.
- Apply the dressing with the blank side against the affected skin and the writing side facing outwards. Secure the dressing using adhesive tape, being careful not to tape directly on to inflamed skin.
- Keep the dressing dry when bathing or remove and re-apply following your wash.
- The dressing can be kept in place for up to 7 days and should only be changed when fluid becomes visible through the dressing; this is known as 'strike-through'.
- **Please note:** PolyMem is to be used instead of any topical products (including moisturiser). If you have applied moisturiser to the skin, please ensure that this has been fully absorbed (after about 2-3 hours) before applying the dressing.



How to Apply

Applying dressings to the head and neck can be difficult due to unavoidable movement in this area. The Head and Neck Nurses or Radiographers can work with you to apply the dressing in a way that makes it comfortable for you. The Polymem dressing can be cut to fit the area using clean scissors. Always cut the dressing slightly larger than the wound, ensuring it covers any inflamed areas too.

The most common area requiring a dressing is the neck. To allow the dressing to fit along the neck contours, it can help to 'fringe' the edge of the dressing as shown in picture.



Using a long strip of polymem dressing, cut inwards about 2-3cm, at intervals along the dressing.

- Wrap the dressing around the neck so that it is loose enough to be comfortable but tight enough to ensure contact with the skin.
- Overlap the dressing and use adhesive tape to secure. Do not apply adhesive tape directly to inflamed skin.

Precautions

Please let the Doctor, Nurses or Radiographers know if you feel the dressing is not helping or if you think that the dressing is irritating your skin.

Infections are rare as the wound is 'superficial' but please report any signs of infection: fever, red - hot swollen area, smelly or abnormal discharge.

Radiotherapy Department

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Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital. Email ruh-tr.pals@nhs.net or telephone 01225 825656 / 826319