1.0 **PURPOSE:**

1.1 To prevent the contamination of Multi-use Medical Gels and transmission of infections related to use of Medical and Ultrasound Gels within WRHA facilities and WRHA funded facilities.

2.0 **PREAMBLE:**

2.1 Medical Gels are used routinely in clinical practice. Nosocomial infections have been associated with contamination of these products in healthcare. The following recommendations are to ensure the safe use of these products.

3.0 **DEFINITIONS:**

3.1 **Asepsis:** The absence of pathogenic (disease-producing) microorganisms.

3.2 **Aseptic Technique:** The purposeful prevention of transfer of microorganisms from the patient’s body surface to a normally sterile body site or from one person to another by keeping the microbe count to a minimum. Also referred to as sterile technique.

3.3 **Bacteriostatic Gel:** Non-Sterile Medical Gel containing components that inhibit the growth or multiplication of bacteria.

3.4 **Facility-Approved Disinfectant:** A disinfectant cleaner that has been approved by the facility or organization.
3.5 **Medical Gels:** Gels used for medical procedures other than ultrasound. This gel can be Sterile or Non-Sterile.

3.6 **Multi-Use:** Used more than once on multiple patients/residents/clients.

3.7 **Non-Sterile Gels:** Ultrasound and Medical Gels which are clean but not sterile.

3.8 **Routine Practices:** A minimum standard of infection control precautions and practices used for all direct patient/resident/client care regardless of their presumed infection status or diagnosis.

3.9 **Single Use:** Used once for a single patient/resident/client.

3.10 **Sterile Gels:** Ultrasound and Medical Gels free from all pathogens.

4.0 **OPERATIONAL DIRECTIVES:**

4.1 Single Use Sterile Gel packages are used when performing procedures that require Aseptic Technique. Once a Sterile Gel has been opened it can no longer be considered sterile.

4.2 Single Use Sterile Gels are used for:
   - 4.2.1 Invasive procedures that pass a device through a tissue e.g. needle localization, and tissue biopsy
   - 4.2.2 Procedures involving a sterile environment or non intact skin
   - 4.2.3 Procedures penetrating mucous membranes
   - 4.2.4 Babies in Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

4.3 Sterile Gels or Multi Use Bacteriostatic Gels are used for:
   - 4.3.1 Endoscopies on intact mucous membranes
   - 4.3.2 Non-endoscopic procedures on mucous membranes, e.g., vaginal/rectal exam.

4.4 **Multi Use Non Sterile Gels:**
   - 4.4.1 Are used for procedures on intact skin. For procedures performed infrequently (greater than one month apart) use a Single Use gel.
   - 4.1.2 Multi-Use Gel containers are not to be refilled or reused.
   - 4.1.3 Discard remainder of contents upon completion of a procedure if the tip of container or dispensing nozzle comes in direct contact with a client/patient/resident, instrumentation or the environment.
   - 4.1.4 Wipe the dispensing nozzle and outside of the container with Facility-Approved Disinfectant after each procedure. Additionally, to reduce contamination of the nozzle, gel should be dispensed into a medicine cup or on a clean disposable cloth and then on to the skin.
   - 4.1.5 Date a Multi-use bottle when opened and discard after one month.
4.1.6 Use a Single Use gel for a patient who is on Droplet or Contact Precautions, or leave the Multi Use container in the room if repeat procedures requiring Non-Sterile gel are necessary. Discard the gel when precautions are discontinued.

4.5 Warmed Gels:
4.5.1 Use warmed gels only when required.
4.5.2 Remove gel packages/containers from the warmer on a daily basis and dry immediately.

4.6 Gel Warmers:
4.6.1 Clean gel warmers weekly and when visibly soiled with a Facility-Approved Disinfectant according to manufacturer’s recommendations.
4.6.2 Maintain according to manufacturer’s recommendations.

4.7 Storage of Gel:
4.6.1 Store in areas that are dry and protected from potential sources of contamination, e.g. dust, moisture, insects, rodents.
4.6.2 Discard gel if evidence of contamination is present or the package integrity has been breached.
4.6.3 Rotate product when restocking takes place.

5.0 REFERENCES:


Operational Directive Contacts:
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