SMTL Dressings Datacard

Product Name:	**SORBSAN**
Classification Name:	**Dressing Calcium Alginate**
Manufacturer:	**Pharma-Plast Ltd, Steriseal Division**

Description

Sorbsan is made from the calcium salt of alginic acid, prepared as a textile fibre, and presented as a loose ‘rope’ or packing for cavities, a ribbon for narrow wounds or sinuses[*** linked mw-si-00 ***], and a flat non-woven pad for application to larger open wounds. When in contact with serum, wound exudate, or solutions containing sodium ions, the insoluble calcium alginate is partially converted to the soluble sodium salt, and a hydrophilic gel is produced, which overlays the wound and provides a micro-environment that is believed to facilitate wound healing.

Indications

Sorbsan sheets may be applied to exuding lesions including leg ulcers[*** linked ul-lu-ve-03 ***], pressure areas[*** linked ul-de-g4-02 ***], donor sites[*** linked me-su-do-00 ***], and most other granulating wounds but for deeper cavity wounds and sinuses[*** linked mw-si-00 ***], the packing and ribbon forms are generally preferred. The dressing also appears to be of value as an adjunct to the systemic treatment of infected or malodorous wounds[*** linked mw-fu-02 ***] and for the management of painful wounds when removal of other more traditional dressings causes unacceptable levels of pain or trauma.

Contra-Indications

Although there are no known contra-indications to the use of Sorbsan, the dressing will be of little value if applied to wounds that are very dry, or covered with hard black necrotic tissue.

Method of use

Sorbsan is placed onto the surface of the wound and covered with a sterile secondary dressing held in place with surgical tape or a bandage as appropriate. The nature of the secondary dressing will be governed by the condition of the wound. If large quantities of exudate are anticipated, a simple absorbent dressing pad may be required; but as the wound heals and less exudate is produced, a thinner pad bearing a plastic film of low adherence may help to conserve moisture and prevent the wound drying out too quickly. Deeper cavity wounds or sinuses[*** linked mw-si-00 ***] may be dressed with Sorbsan packing or ribbon, which should be placed gently in position but not packed in too tightly.

Because the alginate fibre reacts with sodium ions to form a soluble gel, the dressing may be removed by irrigation with sterile normal saline. This may be accomplished without causing either damage to the wound or pain to the patient. It has been reported that a small percentage of patients experience a mild ‘drawing’ or ‘burning’ sensation immediately after the application of an alginate dressing to a dry wound bed. This sensation, which is usually transient, is thought to be due to the hydrophilic nature of the dressing causing temporary localised drying of the surface of the wound. This discomfort may generally be prevented by moistening the surface of the wound with a small quantity of sterile normal saline prior to the application of the dressing.

Frequency of Change

The interval between dressing changes will depend entirely upon the state of the wound. Sorbsan applied to heavily exuding or sloughy wounds[*** linked sw-00 ***] may need replacing daily initially but as healing progresses and the amount of exudate decreases, the interval between changes may be extended to two or three days. At this stage a change to an alternative dressing such as Sorbsan SA should be considered.

Warnings

Wounds that show signs of clinical infection may be dressed with Sorbsan but the dressing should be changed daily and the use of systemic antibiotic therapy considered.

Presentation

The dressings are presented individually packed in peel pouches, sterilised by ethylene oxide.

Sizes

5 cm × 5 cm* 10 cm × 20 cm

10 cm × 10 cm*

Packing 30 cm long Ribbon 40 cm long

* available on Drug Tariff

Bibliography

1. Thomas S, Pain and wound management *Community Outlook,* 1989, July 11-15.

2. Gupta R, *et al.,* Calcium alginate in the management of acute surgical wounds and abcesses, *J. Tissue Viability,* 1991, **1,** 115-116.

3. Thomas S, Alginates; A guide to the properties and uses of the different alginate dressings available today, *J. Wound Care,* 1992, **1,** 29-32.

Revision Details

Revision Author	Dr S. Thomas
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Please inform SMTL of any inaccuracies or changes required in this datacard.

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