

Patient Safety ALERT – Risk of death or serious harm from accidental ingestion of potassium permanganate preparations

- Potassium permanganate is used in wound care because of its antiseptic and antimicrobial properties.
- It is available as a solution for further dilution and as a tablet preparation, which is dissolved in water and further diluted to a specified concentration.
- **It is for external use only and can cause serious harm / be fatal if ingested.**
- The National Reporting and Learning System (NRLS) has identified 43 incidents in the past three and a half years where potassium permanganate tablets have been ingested orally by patients.
- Patients being cared for in their own homes will be prescribed potassium permanganate 'Permitabs' (used make a 1 in 10,000 dilution solution for external use).

FOR ACTION: Please ensure ALL STAFF are vigilant when patients are prescribed potassium permanganate that it is not given or inadvertently taken orally

References

1. North and East Devon Formulary – Wound Dressing and Skin Cleansers, Antiseptics, And Desloughing Agents Sections.
2. Young RJ, Critchley JA, Young KK et al. Fatal acute hepatorenal failure following potassium permanganate ingestion. Hum Exp Toxicol 1996;15(3):259-61.
3. Lifshitz M, Shahak E, Sofer S. Fatal potassium permanganate intoxication in an infant. J Toxicol Clin Toxicol 1999; 37: 801-802.