

NURSE/MIDWIFE INITIATED MEDICINE PROTOCOL

Methyl salicylate cream for relief of muscle / joint pain (for example Metsal[®]/Deep Heat[®])

SESLHDPR/468

POLICY STATEMENT

The Registered Nurse (RN) / Registered Midwife (RM) is authorised to instigate nurse/midwife-initiated medication without an authorised prescriber's order under the specific circumstances set out in the **INDICATIONS** section and provided there are no contraindications present.

It is important for nursing and midwifery staff to remain aware that:

- Minor ailments may be symptoms of other more serious diseases or may be adverse reactions to medication already prescribed
- Nurse-initiated medication may interact with the patient's prescribed medication
- The maximum daily recommended dose of the medication must not be exceeded.¹

The administering nurse/midwife must record the administration on an approved paper or electronic medication chart, clearly indicating that the medicine was nurse initiated.

If the patient continues to require the medication (i.e., more than two doses in 24 hours) then a medical officer (MO) must be consulted and a regular or PRN order obtained.

A change in the patient's condition such as newly occurring or increasing severity of symptoms must be reported to the MO and investigated.

INDICATIONS

Symptomatic relief from muscular aches and pains, including rheumatism, arthritis, fibromyalgia, low back pain, sprains, and strains.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

Known hypersensitivity to the product or individual components:

- Methyl salicylate
- Eucalyptus oil
- Menthol

Not to be used on children under 5 years old.

PRECAUTIONS

For external use only.

Avoid contact with eyes, mucous membranes, broken skin, or open wounds.

Hypersensitivity reactions to these products or individual components can occur.

Safety for use in pregnancy has not been established.

Concurrent anticoagulation.

HISTORY/ASSESSMENT

Assess skin integrity

Use of anticoagulants, check INR if warfarinised

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Drug	Dose	Route	Frequency
Methyl Salicylate Cream	Small amount	Topical	Once only

Apply by gently smoothing into the painful area until absorbed.

MONITORING - POTENTIAL ADVERSE EFFECTS/INTERACTIONS

Monitor skin integrity.

When applied to the skin, methyl salicylate may be absorbed into the blood. Excessive application may increase the risk of bleeding in patients taking warfarin or other anticoagulants.

DOCUMENTATION

A record of the administration must be made on the approved paper or electronic medication chart noting that the medication was nurse initiated.

A further record of the medication administered including indication, dose and effect must be included in the patient's health care record.

PRACTICE POINTS

- Vigorous rubbing is not desirable.
- Avoid contact with face and sensitive areas

REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

1. [NSW Health Policy Directive Medication Handling PD2022_032](#)
2. [MIMs Online](#). Deep Heat.

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REVISION and APPROVAL HISTORY

Date	Version Number	Author and Approval
July 2015	DRAFT	Pharmacy Department, St George Hospital
September 2015	1	Approved by SESLHD Drug & QUM Committee
May 2018	DRAFT 2	Reviewed by nursing and pharmacy staff. Minor wording updates made. References updated.
July 2018	2	Approved by SESLHD Quality Use of Medicines Committee
September 2021	DRAFT 3	Reviewed by nursing and pharmacy staff. Minor wording and reference updates.
October 2021	3	Approved by SESLHD Quality Use of Medicines Committee
June 2023	DRAFT 4	NSW Medicines Formulary reviewed. Reviewed by nursing and pharmacy staff.
September 2023	4	Approved by SESLHD Drug and Therapeutics Committee
August 2025	5	Approved by SESLHD Drug and Therapeutics Committee