

**NEWBORN USE ONLY
GIVEN ON DOCTORS ORDER ONLY**

SAFE HANDLING OF POTASSIUM CHLORIDE

Critical incidents have been associated with the preparation and administration of intravenous potassium chloride.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Newborn Care Centre Drug Administration Policy on Potassium Chloride.

STORAGE

Potassium Chloride ampoules (10mls containing 10mmol) should be stored in a specific container, including lid, in alphabetical order of drug name in a locked medication cupboard. Ampoules of similar appearance, such as Sodium Chloride 0.9% (5mls) should be stored within the manufacturer's box, on a separate shelf.

PRESCRIPTION

1. Prescribing of all IV Potassium Chloride should be in **millimoles**. "Milligrams per Litre" or "percent" will not be acceptable.
2. **Potassium Chloride should be written in full.** Abbreviations such as "KCL" should not be accepted.
3. Orders for IV Potassium Chloride should have **rate, route, dilution and administration instructions** fully specified.
4. Prescriptions without these instructions should not be accepted.

PREPARATION

1. Potassium Chloride should not be added to an IV bag. It must be added to a burette of 100mls and administered through an infusion pump or made up in a syringe and administered through a syringe driver.
2. A maximum of 4mmol can be added to a burette of 100mls.
3. A completed orange "Baxter Additive Label" should be attached to the burette or syringe administration tubing.
4. At commencement of infusion, two nursing staff should check the correct drug (Potassium Chloride), dose, dilution, labeling, route and rate prior to administration. Both signatures must appear on the fluid prescription sheet.
5. Infusion orders and solution must be checked at the commencement of each nursing shift and signed on fluid prescription chart.

USE PRE-MADE POTASSIUM CHLORIDE IV SOLUTION WHEN POSSIBLE.

PRE-MADE SOLUTIONS KEPT IN LEVEL 3 STORE ROOM.

REFERENCE

Policy for the Safe Handling of Intravenous Potassium Chloride in Health Care Facilities, February 2004, NSW Health Department, Circular No 2004/5.

Intravenous Potassium Chloride can be fatal if given inappropriately, October 2003, Safety and Quality Council Medication Alert.