DRUGS

NURSES should refer to manufacturer’s summary of product characteristics and to appropriate local guidelines.

GENERIC AND PROPRIETARY NAMES
- ActivHeal Alginate
- Algisite
- Algosteril
- Curasorb
- Kaltostat
- Melgisorb
- Seasorb
- Sorbsan
- Tegagen
- Urgosorb

ACTION
- These wound dressings absorb fluid into their fibres and the space between the fibres, thus controlling the state of hydration of the wound.
- The dressing is dry until it comes into contact with wound exudate, when it forms a gel.

INDICATIONS
- To be used on moderately or heavily exuding wounds.
- Can be used on superficial or cavity wounds.
- Some alginate dressings may be used for their haemostatic properties (ability to stop bleeding).

CLASSIFICATION
- Wound management products.

CONTRAINdications
- Eschars
- Dry wounds
- Any history of sensitivity to alginate dressings

ADMINISTRATION
- Available as flat dressings or rope in a variety of sizes.
- The dressing is applied directly to the wound.
- The dressing should be loosely packed because it will swell and tight packing may result in too much pressure on the wound bed.
- Individual manufacturers’ instructions should be consulted regarding application.
- Dressings that have become stuck can be soaked off with saline or a low-force shower.

INTERACTIONS
- Topical antibiotic or antimicrobial agents may interfere with the gelling process.

NURSING CONSIDERATIONS
- Gelling characteristics of dressings and absorbency vary between products.
- The choice of dressing may depend on local availability, personal experience and patient choice.
- Some alginate dressings are suitable for use in conjunction with antibiotics and careful monitoring. In these cases daily dressing changes are normally necessary.

PATIENT TEACHING
- In most cases, these dressings benefit from pain-free removal.
- Explain the principles of moist wound healing and why this dressing has been chosen.
- Ensure that the patient knows when her or his next appointment for wound redressing is and what action to take if the dressing becomes compromised beforehand.

REFERENCES

