

How to use Potassium Permanganate Soaks

Department of Dermatology



How to store Permitabs® (potassium permanganate soak tablets)

Permitabs® must be:

- Kept out of the sight and reach of children.
- Stored in a cool, dry and well ventilated place. Protect from light.
- Kept away from combustible materials.
- Kept in the original container. **DO NOT** mix the Permitabs® or the potassium permanganate soak with any other substances. The lid should always be replaced securely on the Permitabs® immediately after use.

What to do if the potassium permanganate is swallowed

If anyone accidentally swallows the Permitabs® (potassium permanganate tablets) or the soak, wash out the mouth thoroughly with water and give plenty of water to drink. Contact your nearest accident and emergency department immediately.

What to do if you get potassium permanganate in your eyes

Wash your eyes straight away with plenty of water for up to 15 minutes. Remove any contact lenses and open your eyes widely. Contact your nearest accident and emergency department immediately.

References

Alliance Pharmaceuticals Limited. (2012). Information leaflet - Permitabs® tablets for the preparation of external solutions. Alliance Pharmaceuticals Limited: Chippenham

Adapted with permission from Cardiff and Vale University Health Board. April 2026.

What are potassium permanganate soaks used to treat?

Potassium permanganate is an antiseptic. It is used as a soak to cleanse and dry weeping skin conditions such as eczema and wounds.

How to prepare potassium permanganate soaks

The potassium permanganate soak will need to be made just before it is used. To prepare the soaks you will need the following:

- A bowl or bucket
- A clean bin liner
- Measuring jug
- A pair of disposable gloves
- Petroleum jelly (Vaseline®)
- Cold/tepid water
- Paper towels
- Permitabs® (potassium permanganate soak tablets) – purple, flat-sided pellets that are shaped like tablets. **DO NOT** put in mouth.



WARNING!

Permitabs® (potassium permanganate soak tablets) are for external use only. **DO NOT** put in mouth. Permitabs® (potassium permanganate soak tablets) are harmful if swallowed.

Prepare the soak using the following method:

1. Line a bowl or bucket with a clean bin liner to prevent the potassium permanganate from staining the container.

2. Using a measuring jug, measure 4 litres of cold/tepid water and pour into the lined bowl/bucket.



3. Put on disposable gloves to prevent staining of the skin.
4. Open and remove **ONE** Permitabs® from the container. Replace the lid securely on the pot of Permitabs.
5. Add the **ONE** Permitabs® to the lined bowl/bucket of water.



6. With the gloved hand, agitate the water to dissolve the tablet. The tablet will take a few minutes to dissolve. The water will turn a rose wine colour.



7. Do not use the potassium permanganate soak if it is cloudy or has turned brown in colour. Dispose of the brown soak as described in the section "How to dispose of potassium permanganate soaks" and prepare the solution again.

How to use potassium permanganate soaks

1. Prepare the potassium permanganate soak immediately before use as described in the section "How to prepare potassium permanganate soaks."
2. If you are soaking your hands or feet, apply petroleum jelly to your nails to prevent the potassium permanganate soak from staining.



1. Soak the affected area of skin in the solution for 15 minutes. Take care not to splash the potassium permanganate soak on clothes, furniture or flooring as it stains.
2. Remove the affected area from the soak. Take off any excess solution and pat dry with a paper towel.



3. Apply your prescribed cream or dressing.
4. The duration of your treatment will be determined by your doctor or nurse. If you notice that your skin becomes dry and/or irritated, contact your doctor or nurse for advice.

How to dispose of potassium permanganate soaks

The used potassium permanganate soaks should be disposed of down an outside drain and the bowl/bucket cleaned immediately. **DO NOT** dispose of the used potassium permanganate soak down the toilet, sinks or bath because it stains ceramics.

Any unused Permitabs® should be returned to your local pharmacy for disposal.

WARNINGS



Danger: Very harmful if swallowed.

Do not eat or drink when using this product.

Do not mix tablets or solution with other substances.



May intensify fire: Oxidiser.

Do not smoke when using this product.

Keep away from combustible materials.



Very toxic to aquatic life with long lasting effects.

Avoid release to the environment.

This material and its container must be disposed
of as hazardous waste.

Do not touch or use Permitabs® if you are allergic
to potassium permanganate.

Do not get the potassium permanganate soak
near or in your eyes and avoid contact with the
inside of the mouth, nose, ear, genitals, anus as
it may cause irritation.

Do not eat, drink or smoke when using this product.

For further information about potassium permanganate soaks contact:

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**“This document is available in Welsh /
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg”.**