

Gels and Creams

Potential Hazard

Exposure to possible hazardous chemicals found and used in the PT area.

- Cleaning chemicals such as glutaraldehyde used to disinfect whirlpools or tubs.
- Gel used for ultrasound procedures.
- Prescription medications, creams, or ointments rubbed into skin of patient by therapist during physical therapy treatment.

Possible Solutions

- Use less-toxic products if feasible and available, or use other processes for sterilization.
- Rooms in which glutaraldehyde is to be used should be well ventilated and large enough to ensure adequate dilution of vapor, with a minimum air exchange rate of 10 air changes per hour.
- Use increased dilution ventilation in whirlpool rooms and x-ray rooms, along with the careful application of the glutaraldehyde with a long-handled brush rather than a spray applicator.
- Follow procedures for safe administration of medications and creams. Therapists should wear gloves while applying certain medications to patients (e.g., if skin contact with the medication is indicated only for the patient).
- Implement a written program that meets the requirements of the Hazard Communication Standard to provide for worker training, warning labels, and access to Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for all hazardous chemicals/medications used by physical therapists.