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## F-180 Transdermal Medications

### Purpose

Apply medications absorbed through the skin.

### Applies To

Registered Nurses

Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurses

Other (*Identify*): \_\_\_\_\_

### Equipment/Supplies

- Disposable gloves (use sterile gloves for sterile procedure).
- Ordered medication (ointment, cream, patch, spray, powder).
- Basin of warm water.
- Washcloth, towel, non-drying soap.
- Cotton-tipped applicators or tongue blades, as applicable.
- Tape, as applicable.
- Gauze pads, as applicable.

### Procedure

1. Wash hands. Refer to the Hand Washing procedure.
2. Don clean gloves.
3. Cleanse affected area. Remove all previous medication and/or drainage. Apply topical agent according to the steps below:
4. Cream, ointment, oil-based lotion:
  - a. Place prescribed dosage of medication in hand and rub between hands.
  - b. Apply evenly over skin surface (follow direction of hair growth).
5. Anti-anginal ointment:
  - a. Apply prescribed number of inches of medication to paper using measuring guide.
  - b. Areas for application include: chest, back, upper arms, and thighs. *Do not apply on hairy surfaces or over scars because they may impede absorption.*
  - c. Hold sides of paper and place directly onto skin. *Do not massage or rub into skin.*
  - d. Date, time, and initial paper.

- e. Secure in place with tape if needed.
  - f. Remove previous paper and clean old application area.
  - g. Rotate sites during each application.
6. Patch:
- a. Assess for application site. *Avoid areas that are hairy, oily, or irritated.*
  - b. Remove patch from protective covering and hold patch by the edges. Do not touch adhesive edges.
  - c. Apply patch. Press firmly with palm of hand for 10 seconds.
  - d. Date, time, and initial patch.
  - e. Remove old patch. Fold in half and dispose of patch.
  - f. Rotate sites daily unless ordered for longer example Fentanyl usually 48 hour patch.
7. Aerosol spray:
- a. Shake container to mix all of the contents thoroughly.
  - b. Verify directions for use and recommended distance to hold container away from area.
  - c. Have the client turn face or cover face with a towel if the spray is to be applied to the neck or upper body. *This prevents inhalation of medication.*
  - d. Spray prescribed amount of medication evenly over the affected area.
8. Suspension-based lotion:
- a. Shake container to mix all of the contents thoroughly.
  - b. Apply a small amount of lotion to the gauze pad.
  - c. Apply to the affected area by stroking evenly (follow direction of hair growth).
  - d. Inform the client that area will dry and feel cool.
9. Powders:
- a. Dry skin surface thoroughly.
  - b. Separate any skin folds or creases. *This applies to areas such as those between toes, on abdomen, or under axilla or breasts.*
  - c. Apply powder lightly in a dusting motion so that a fine layer of powder covers the site.
10. Apply dressings as ordered by the physician.
11. Remove gloves and dispose of supplies according to the Agency Waste Disposal Policy.

12. Wash hands. Refer to the Hand Washing procedure.

**Documentation Guidelines**

Document in the clinical record:

1. Procedure performed with medication name, dose, route, and time of administration.
2. Condition of site prior to topical application.
3. Report of any changes in skin condition given to physician.

**Related Procedures**

None.

**Policy History**

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