



Question: What is the guidance available for the use of adrenaline 'soaks' on wounds?

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Information

Adrenaline (epinephrine) 1:1,000 solution for injection is not licensed for topical administration.¹ Nevertheless, reference sources advise that adrenaline solution 1mg/mL (1 in 1,000) can be applied topically in the management of capillary bleeding.^{2,3} Adrenaline constricts arterioles and capillaries and causes blanching when applied locally to mucous membranes and exposed tissues.³ The American Hospital Formulary Services advise that solutions containing adrenaline in concentrations of 0.002% (1:50,000) to 0.1% (1:1,000) may be sprayed or applied with cotton or gauze to the skin, mucous membranes or other tissues as a topical haemostatic.⁴

For the management of surface bleeding in palliative care, gauze soaked in adrenaline 1mg in 1mL (1 in 1,000) may be applied to the affected area with pressure for 10 minutes.^{5,6} However, due to the risk of ischaemic necrosis and rebound vasodilation only short-term use is advised.⁶ Note, the use of a filter needle should be considered when drawing up the contents of a glass ampoule.

References

- 1) Summary of Product Characteristics Adrenaline (Epinephrine) Injection 1:1,000 Solution for Injection. Available from www.hpra.ie. Accessed on the 05/04/2017.

Palliative Meds Info: Terms and Conditions

The information outlined above is intended for healthcare professionals only. The information outlined above is believed to accurately reflect the medical literature at the time of writing. Healthcare professionals must use their own judgment to determine the accuracy and relevance of the information. See www.olh.ie for full terms and conditions.

- 2) Monograph Prescribing in Palliative Care. British National Formulary. Available from www.medicinescomplete.com. Accessed on the 05/04/2017.
- 3) Monograph Adrenaline. Martindale: The complete drug reference. Available from www.medicinescomplete.com. Accessed on the 05/04/2017.
- 4) Monograph Epinephrine (Adrenaline). American Hospital Formulary Services. Available from www.medicinescomplete.com. Accessed on the 05/04/2017.
- 5) Twycross R, Wilcock A and Toller CS. Symptom Management in Advanced Cancer. 4th Edition 2009. Palliativedrugs.com. Pg 236.
- 6) Monograph Haemostatics. Palliative Care Formulary. Available from www.palliativedrugs.com. Accessed on the 05/04/2017.