



COHESIVE HEALTHCARE MANAGEMENT & CONSULTING

Mangum Regional Medical Center

TITLE		POLICY	
Paraffin		800	
MANUAL	EFFECTIVE DATE	REVIEW DATE	
Rehabilitation			
DEPARTMENT	REFERENCE		
Rehabilitation Services			

SCOPE: All professional rehabilitation staff that will be utilizing paraffin as a treatment modality at Mangum Regional Medical Center.

PURPOSE: To provide comprehensive information and procedure for paraffin use.

DEFINITION: Paraffin wax is a white or colorless soft, solid wax. It is made from saturated hydrocarbons. Paraffin wax is a therapeutic modality that is used for the purpose of heat therapy to help increase blood flow, relax muscles, decrease joint stiffness, and pain.

POLICY: Physician order received specific for “paraffin” or “heat modality.”

Indications:

- Hands or feet
- Arthritis
- Chronic joint disease
- Bursitis
- Joint stiffness
- Contractures
- Scar tissue
- Tenosynovitis
- Sudek’s atrophy
- CVA spasticity

Contraindications:

- Open or damaged skin
- Patient under isolation precautions/guidelines

Precautions:

- Dermatological disorders
- Impaired sensation or circulation/sensory deprivation
- Surgical hardware

PROCEDURE:

1. Prior to receiving treatment, the patient is evaluated by the therapist for appropriateness of the modality.
2. Explain treatment to patient.
 - a. A paraffin bath is a metal tank containing an electrical resistance-heating unit in the bottom of the tank. A rheostat controls the heater and maintains the paraffin at an even temperature.
 - b. Commercial paraffin is used for the bath with paraffin oil added to lower the temperature. This allows the bath to maintain a temperature of 124 degrees to 128 degrees. The lower specific heat and minimal convection of melted paraffin prevent burning of the patient's skin. Penetration is spherical.
 - c. The bath produces an intense erythema, leaving the skin moist, soft and pliable. This results from an increase in temperature, vasodilation and an increase in circulation. Local metabolic activity increases, and the sweat glands are stimulated. Phagocytosis increases in areas of inflammation. Sedation, relief of pain and muscular tension are also effects of this local heat.
3. Remove all jewelry. Area to be treated is washed with soap and water, following CDC guidelines for hand washing.
 - a. This patient washes his or her own hands, staff will observe to assure CDC guidelines followed.
4. Drape and position patient.
5. Check bath thermometer temperature and instruct patient to dip the affected part in the bath removing immediately.
6. Following removal, the patient is instructed not to move the part in order not to break the wax seal.
7. When the liquid wax solidifies on the part, it is again immersed in the wax bath avoiding dipping new layers beyond previous ones and immediately remove without breaking the seal.
8. Repeat steps 5 through 7 until patient has dipped between 7 to 10 times as determined by therapist.
9. Part is then wrapped in a plastic bag and towel and elevated for approximately 20 minutes without breaking the wax seal.
10. Provide patient with audible alarm system if not in direct line of sight.
 - a. Instruct patient to report any sensation of burning or discomfort during treatment procedure.
 - b. Therapist to note undo redness after wax removal.
11. Treatment follow-up:
 - a. Carefully remove the paraffin from patient and discard.
 - b. Check skin condition.
 - c. Check paraffin level in bath. Add additional paraffin wax as needed.
 - d. Clean up area replacing all items used in designated location.

REVISIONS/UPDATES

Date	Brief Description of Revision/Change