

Maternity Services



Medical honey simplified

A patient guide to the role of honey in
wound management

Medical Honey is a natural, non-toxic agent that has been used to treat wounds for thousands of years. This is often used within wound dressings and as a topical treatment to reduce or stop the growth of a wide range of bacteria (antimicrobial) which are commonly found in wounds.

How does medical honey work?

In order to survive bacteria need water. Honey draws this fluid away which in turn damages the internal structures of the bacterial cells.

Why can I not use table honey?

In laboratory tests table honey has shown to be less effective at reducing bacteria in wounds and contains a wider range of microbial spores when compared to sterilised honey.

Is medical honey safe?

There is clinical evidence to support the safe use of honey in wound care. You must advise your healthcare professional if you have ever had any reaction to bee-related or honey-based products to prevent an adverse reaction.

Honey is safe to use on patients with diabetes as there is no evidence to suggest effecting blood sugar levels.

Honey has not been shown to be toxic to the wound bed or to the body. As of yet there are no reported cases of honey-resistant strains of bacteria.

In rare occasions patients may sometimes experience stinging or drawing sensations due to how the honey draws fluid away from the wound to enable healing.

Notes:

Summary

- Honey is a safe method to reduce high levels of bacteria in wound beds.
- Honey is an anti-microbial, antifungal and anti-inflammatory product that promotes faster rates of healing with reduced risk of infection.
- If you experience any side-effects or are unsure how to use medicated honey please contact your healthcare provider.

Comments, Suggestions and Complaints

We are committed to providing a high standard of professional support and advise. To help us maintain this we welcomes any feedback that you have regarding your experiences of our service. Please share your comments, suggestions or complaints with a member of the team.

Postnatal ward contact: 01923217389 / 01923217366

Alternatively you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).

PALS provides advice and support to patients, their families and carers and can help to resolve any problems, concerns or complaints that you may have. You can contact PALS on 01923 217198 or westherts.pals@nhs.net

What benefits does medical honey give me?

Medical honey forms a physical shield on the wound and acts as an antimicrobial. It has been shown to promote healing at a greater rate compared to wounds that don't use it, and there is also evidence to suggest it relieves pain with its anti-inflammatory properties.

Medical honey can be used as an alternative to antibiotics for anyone without symptoms of infection and can also be used alongside antibiotics if a clinician advises those due to symptoms of infection.



Medical honey wound gel

At West Hertfordshire we advocate the use of medicated honey wound gel to aid the healing of perineal trauma.

Using medicated honey gel after perineal trauma can help to reduce the risk of infection and reduce any inflammation. The plant based wax can coat the exposed nerve endings, which can reduce pain levels as well as repel fluids.

How to use it

Perineal use

Wash your hands and use a clean finger to apply a thin layer of medicated honey gel (pea size) to the wound area times per day. In the first 24/48 hours, you may want to use medicated honey after each time you use the toilet.

After this period, three times per day should be sufficient.

To support healing please remember to do your pelvic floor exercises regularly, you may want to do these each time you have applied your medicated honey in order to remind you.

Pelvic floor exercises

These muscles are important for bladder and bowel control. During birth and pregnancy they may have stretched or damaged. Doing your pelvic floor exercises will increase the blood flow to the damaged perineal tissues, helping to speed up the healing process. They will also help to strengthen the pelvic floor after the stretch of delivery, preventing bladder and bowel weakness.



Caesarean section wounds

For women with standard wound dressings, the dressing can be removed on day five. If your wound is inflamed, red or oozing but you are otherwise well, your midwife may give you medicated honey gel. Wash your hands and apply a layer of gel across the wound where there is any redness, inflammation or oozing.

This may cause a slight stinging feeling as the honey will draw the fluid away from the wound, the initial sting should disappear momentarily. If there is a persistent stinging feeling, please contact your healthcare provider.

Women with PICO dressings should only be given medicated honey if no other dressing is being used. You cannot use medicated honey under a PICO dressing as it disrupts the mechanism of PICO. Medicated honey may be used on day seven or after, if a second PICO dressing is not required.

Each tube is for single patient use, but valid for four months once opened.