

What are Silver Nitrate Sticks?

- Wooden sticks (sometimes called applicators) that have tips covered with silver nitrate and potassium nitrate.

Why use Silver Nitrate Sticks?

- They can be used as a last resort to treat or remove **hypergranulation tissue** around the feeding tube stoma. Hypergranulation tissue is bumpy or swollen tissue that is wet and often bleeds easily. It can also be painful. It is a common complication of gastrostomy tubes
- The silver burns the tissue, causing the granulation tissue to die and fall off. This will help heal the skin.



- ALERT:**
- Do not use if the person has a sensitivity to silver.
 - Using silver nitrate sticks on the tissue may be painful. Pain medication, such as, acetaminophen or ibuprofen may be taken before or after the silver nitrate stick is used.

How to use Silver Nitrate Sticks

- Wash your hands with soap and water before and after using the silver nitrate stick.
- Clean the stoma with soap and water, and pat or let air dry.
- To keep the healthy skin around the stoma safe, put a barrier cream (Example: Vaseline® or Zinc cream) on it.
- The silver needs to be a little bit wet so that it can work. If the tissue is dry, dip the silver tip into a small amount of sterile or distilled water. Do not use salt water, or saline, because it will stop the silver from working.
- Roll the tip of the stick only over the hypergranulation tissue—avoid applying it to healthy skin.
 - ⇒ One stick is usually enough for each application.
 - ⇒ The tissue may turn a grayish-black colour—this is normal. This colour will disappear slowly over time.
- If you accidentally touch the silver nitrate stick to healthy skin, wash that skin with saline right away to stop the silver from working.

How often to use Silver Nitrate Sticks

- Silver nitrate sticks may be used once a day for up to 14 days unless the hypergranulation tissue is gone before then. If the tissue is not gone after 14 days, contact: _____

Where to get Silver Nitrate Sticks

You can buy silver nitrate sticks at your local pharmacy.

Where to keep Silver Nitrate Sticks

Keep them safely stored away from children. When wet, the silver tips can cause damage to healthy skin.

Adapted with permission from SickKids.

G/GJ tubes: Using silver nitrate to treat granulation tissue. (July 30, 2019) Retrieved from <https://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/healthaz/gastrointestinal/ggj-tubes-using-silver-nitrate-to-treat-granulation-tissue/?language=en> on November 28, 2024.

