

Good infection prevention practice: using ultrasound gel - Summary Clinical Guideline

Reference No:CG-CLIN/4066/22

Summary guideline

1. Introduction

Ultrasound gel has been associated with outbreaks of infection in various settings worldwide and risk of contamination of non-sterile ultrasound gel has been highlighted. Such outbreaks have typically included serious clinical infections (NatPSA/2021/010/UKHSA): The safe use of ultrasound gel to reduce infection risk November 2021.

Standard ultrasound gel is not produced as a sterile product, although sterile versions are available. Examinations using ultrasound gel and ultrasound-guided invasive procedures are conducted routinely in various clinical settings and situations. Patients range from those who are 'fit and well' to vulnerable individuals, such as those with severe immunosuppression and those who are critically ill.

This guidance should be considered in the wider context of standard IPC precautions. Patient safety is paramount, but the environmental impact associated with adhering to this guidance needs to be considered. Local risk assessments could be used to augment these recommendations.

This summary guideline/decision tree is aligned with the government guidance (Good infection prevention practice: using ultrasound gel, November 2021). The full guideline includes additional guidance on scenarios when sterile gel is recommended and what types of gel containers should be used.

The decision tree on page 2 in the summary guideline and appendix 3 in the full guideline directs the clinician to using non-sterile gel or sterile gel depending on the answers to the questions in the decision tree.

**Good infection prevention
Practice: using ultrasound gel**

Decision tree for gel type to use in
Various clinical settings/situations

