



## How to Apply Paste Bandages

### What are paste bandages?

Paste bandages (medicated dressings / bandages) are used to treat many types of eczema, psoriasis and some wounds affecting the legs and arms. A paste bandage is made of cotton bandage soaked in a medicated paste. There are many different types of bandage which contain different substances such as:

- calamine (soothing),
- zinc oxide (helps healing),
- ichthammol (reduces itching),
- coal tar (reduces itching) and
- clioquinol (antiseptic).

The benefits of using paste bandages are that:

- they are refreshing, cooling and sooth itchy skin
- they are a barrier and prevent further damage from scratching
- they soften thickened (lichenified) skin on the arms and legs which can occur with scratching.
- they help the creams you apply underneath to work better

### When do I use them?

Before using paste bandages **you should be taught how to use them** by your nurse or doctor as they are often used with your moisturising creams or with your other treatments such as topical corticosteroids. Using bandages in this way helps to soften the skin and helps the creams you apply underneath to work better. However you do have to be careful because they may increase the risk of side effects from creams such as topical corticosteroids, they may irritate the hair follicles and cause spots (folliculitis) and should not be used if there is any sign of infection or if you are allergic to any of the ingredients in them. Paste bandages are generally only used for a few weeks at a time, changed every few days and then used intermittently to treat your skin condition.. Check with you doctor or nurse about when and how to use them.

### What equipment do I need?

You will need to make sure you have every thing ready before you start and are clear how long you should use them for and when to change them. You will need:

- An emollient / moisturiser
- Topical steroids (if you have been advised to use them),
- Paste bandage
- Outer bandage
- Pair of scissors
- Towel

### Preparing your skin



Before applying your bandages you should bath or shower using your bath emollient / soap substitute. After washing and drying apply your emollient to the skin and topical steroid to the areas of eczema. The bandages are then applied over the treatments.

## Applying your bandages

There are 2 ways this can be done:

- **Method 1 Cutting and overlap**

Start at the base of the toes and take the bandage around the foot for one and a half turns and then cut the bandage. Repeat this around the foot, make sure you have included the heel and the bandage is overlapping by half the width of the bandage each time. Continue doing this until the leg is covered below the knee. They can also be used on arms starting at the wrist.



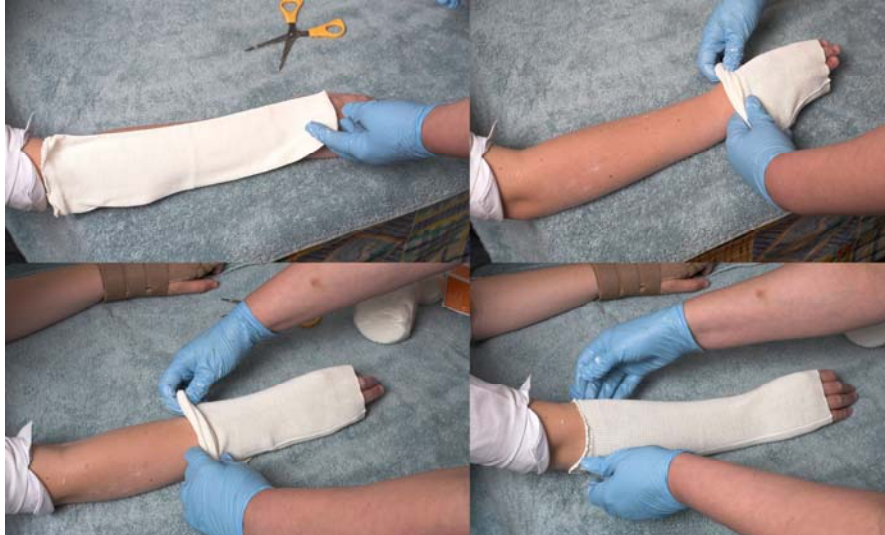
- **Method 2 Pleating**

Start at the base of the toes and take the bandage around the foot. Wrap around the foot and fold back (pleating) upon itself and apply in the opposite direction, overlapping by half the width of the bandage. Continue up the leg applying a pleat in the bandage at each turn at the side of the leg, taking care that the pleat does not lie over any bony areas. They can also be used on arms starting at the wrist.



### Alternative Method Zipzoc® Stocking

Zipzoc® bandages are another form of paste bandage which can be used as an alternative and may be easier for some patients and carers to use. They are like a sock which can be used in the same way as paste bandages but can be cut for either a leg or arm and pulled on over the treatment creams.



### Outer Bandage

The paste bandages should be covered with a further outer bandage or layer to prevent it slipping and staining clothing. This may be a cotton tubular bandage or a self-adhesive bandage that is wrapped round the arm or leg. Your nurse will show you how to use the different types. When you have finished applying the bandages check they are not too tight, you can move fingers and toes and they have not gone blue.



### Removing the bandage

You should be careful when removing the bandages so you don't damage your skin. Overlapped bandages should be removed strip by strip and pleated bandages should be removed by unfolding the pleats to avoid damaging the skin. The paste bandage and outer bandages should not be reused but thrown away.

