



### 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.

