

# Hand control mittens

## Critical Care Unit

### Patient Information Leaflet

### Introduction

This leaflet contains information about hand control mittens.

It tells you:

- What hand control mittens are
- Why hand control mittens need to be used
- What having hand control mittens means for the patient

### What are hand control mittens?

They are padded gloves, please see Figure 1.



Figure 1 shows hand control mittens.

## Why are hand control mittens used?

Patients have lines and tubes put in so that treatments can be given during illness. In Critical Care Unit, some of these treatments are needed to keep patients alive.

Unfortunately, many patients who are very unwell become delirious, restless, fidgety and confused. This is particularly common in the Critical Care Unit. Through no fault of their own, patients may then attempt to remove their lines and tubes, putting themselves at risk of harm.

In this situation we may consider using hand mittens to stop them removing these lines and tubes.

The nurses and doctors will have tried to calm and reassure the patient to see if this helps to keep their lines and tubes in place. However, if the patient is still very restless, we sometimes have to use mittens for a short time to make sure that patients get the treatment they need.

Mittens are not used very often and the need to use them has to be reviewed every day. Staff have to follow strict guidelines to ensure that they are used correctly.

The staff decide to use mittens on what is known as a 'best interest' basis. This means that for a patient who is not able to make decisions themselves, mittens are put on when it is felt that this is in their best interests.

Where possible, we will always try to involve relatives or advocates (representatives of the patient) in this. We will try and show you the mittens before they are used but sometimes we may have to put them on before you visit.

## **What are the benefits of using the mittens?**

- Nutrition, hydration or medication tubes will still be in place which is vital for the patient.
- They prevent the distress and discomfort of replacing tubes or lines that patients have removed.

## **What happens when patients are wearing mittens?**

When the mittens are used, they are removed regularly to check that patients' hands and the skin underneath are not being harmed by the mittens. This may be timed around your visits so that they can be removed when you are visiting.

## **What are the side effects of using the mittens?**

The mittens if are put on too tightly, this may damage the skin. Nursing staff check patients on a regular basis in order to prevent this.

## **Can I find out more?**

If you have any concerns about the mittens being used, or would like to discuss them, please speak to the nurse in charge of the ward.

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

**This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:**

<http://dgft.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/critical-care-unit/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email [dgft.patient.information@nhs.net](mailto:dgft.patient.information@nhs.net)

**This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.**

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