

CATEGORY: DRESSINGS

THE ACTIVHEAL® DRESSING RANGE

MAKING THE CASE

INTRODUCING THE ACTIVHEAL RANGE

Non-healing wounds represent a significant burden to health care systems, where it is estimated that 4–5% of the adult population has a stalled wound at any one time (Guest et al, 2017). The annual cost to the NHS attributable to wound management and associated comorbidities is estimated at £5.3bn (Guest et al, 2017), making cost-saving high on the current NHS agenda.

With these current challenges in mind, the ActivHeal® range (Advanced Medical Solutions) was specifically developed as an affordable and effective wound care solution for the NHS, and has been demonstrated to provide clinical effectiveness in practice, combined with significant cost savings. This range of advanced dressings provides a full and comprehensive selection, to support healing at all stages and helps to facilitate the correct dressing selection across all acute and chronic wound types.

The colour-coded packaging has been designed to simplify dressing selection, using generic dressing names (e.g. Foam, Aquafiber and Alginate) and clear instructions on the back of the cartons, making it simple to identify and select the correct dressing for the individual wound (Figure 1), thus saving the clinician time and reducing wastage, as well as providing cost savings. The ActivHeal range comprises:

- **ActivHeal Silicone Foam** with atraumatic adhesive, preventing trauma to the wound bed and periwound skin; for use on moderate to heavily exuding wounds, particularly for patients with fragile skin or those experiencing issues with pain at dressing change.
- **ActivHeal Silicone Wound Contact Layer**, to protect the wound bed whilst allowing exudate to pass through into the secondary dressing. It can remain in place for up to 14 days while the secondary outer absorbent pad can be changed without damaging the primary contact layer.
- **ActivHeal Antimicrobial Foam with PHMB** provides a waterproof and bacterial barrier, with rapid and effective antimicrobial action across a broad spectrum of bacteria.

- **ActivHeal Foam Adhesive**, a two-layer dressing with an absorbent polyurethane foam core, which absorbs wound exudate vertically, holding it within the dressing, thus preventing maceration to the periwound and surrounding skin.
- **ActivHeal Foam Non-Adhesive**, with two-layer construction, is an ideal absorbent dressing that is used as a key part of a wound dressing regimen, suitable for use under compression bandaging
- **ActivHeal Foam Contact** is a three-layer dressing that has been developed to offer excellent absorption properties alongside security and protection on moderately to heavily exuding wounds.
- **ActivHeal Aquafiber Ag (Antimicrobial)**, with silver ions that are released in the presence of wound fluid, providing an effective antimicrobial agent for up to 7 days (based on *in vitro* testing; AMS, data on file).
- **ActivHeal Aquafiber**, a soft, conformable, highly absorbent fibre dressing that converts to a soft clear gel when in contact with wound exudate.
- **ActivHeal Aquafiber Extra**, a higher-absorbing clear gelling fibre dressing that effectively addresses the key challenges of improved exudate management, with strong tensile performance.
- **ActivHeal Alginate**, which absorbs exudate, encouraging a moist wound environment and can be used to control minor bleeding.
- **ActivHeal Hydrogel**, specifically formulated with a high water content to donate moisture to dry, necrotic and sloughy wounds.
- **ActivHeal Hydrocolloid**, which provides an ideal moist environment, encouraging autolytic debridement and promoting granulation.



Figure 1: The simple, colour-coded packaging of the ActivHeal range, designed to aid appropriate dressing selection

Table 1: A summary of clinical evidence for the products in the ActivHeal range

Product	Clinical evidence and key findings
ActivHeal PHMB Foam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A case study evaluating the effectiveness of ActivHeal PHMB Foam dressing in the management of an infected plantar neuropathic foot ulcer demonstrated positive outcomes, including management of infection and patient acceptability (Welch & Forder, 2016) ■ A clinical evaluation (n=32) demonstrated that ActivHeal PHMB Foam performed effectively to manage a variety of wounds (Barrett, 2017)
ActivHeal Aquafiber Ag	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A clinical evaluation (n=37) found that Aquafiber Ag dressing is safe, performs well and is effective in promoting healing and reducing bioburden (Welch et al, in press)
ActivHeal Silicone Foam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A clinical evaluation (n=20), which assessed the performance of ActivHeal Silicone Foam dressings in clinical practice, found that the comfort of the dressing increased patient acceptability and clinicians were satisfied with the treatment (Sinclair et al, 2016)
ActivHeal Foam Contact and Foam Adhesive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Product evaluations carried out to assess the performance of ActivHeal Foam Contact dressing in clinical practice found that the dressing performed well in handling high levels of exudate (Johnson & Spruce, 2013; Johnson & Forder, 2012; Bullough et al, 2015; Sinclair & Yorke, 2015)
ActivHeal Aquafiber and Aquafiber Extra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Product evaluations carried out on ActivHeal Aquafiber in clinical practice demonstrated that the dressing performed well in terms of fluid handling, durability and patient acceptability (Parkes, 2015; Sinclair & Yorke, 2015; Yorke, 2015; McCreddie & Maccallum, 2012)
ActivHeal Alginate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A series of case studies evaluated the clinical effectiveness of the dressings in the ActivHeal wound care dressing range, with positive results for each product in terms of wound management and patient acceptability (Ousey et al, 2011)
ActivHeal Hydrocolloid	
ActivHeal Hydrogel	
ActivHeal Silicone Wound Contact Layer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A series of case studies evaluated the performance of ActivHeal Silicone Wound Contact Layer on a variety of wounds, and demonstrated that the dressing reduced pain, promoted healing and protected the periwound skin and thus improved patient wellbeing (Mancini, 2015)

Explanation of how to use this guide: This document can be used to make the case for implementing effective prevention and management measures and may be supported by data from your own care setting. As well as economic impact, it is important to know the impact of interventions on patient quality of life and outcomes.

MAKING THE CASE

CLINICAL EVIDENCE FOR THE ACTIVHEAL RANGE

Clinical studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of the dressings within the ActivHeal range. A variety of clinical scenarios using this range in practice has shown excellent results for both clinicians and their patients (Table 1). ActivHeal dressings have been proven to be effective, comfortable and easy to use. In an evaluation of the ActivHeal foam dressing (Ousey et al, 2011), 98% were 'very satisfied' with the product's ease of use, rating it as similar or better than the market-leading branded dressings.

In clinical studies, performance has been shown as excellent. For example, ActivHeal PHMB Foam and ActivHeal Aquafiber Extra have been found to have superior exudate-handling capacity, compared to similar market-leading branded dressings. ActivHeal PHMB Foam can manage 31g of exudate per 10cm² over a 24-hour period, compared to a market-leading product, which was shown to manage 18g of exudate per 10cm² over the same time period. Similarly, Aquafiber Extra can manage 35.8g of exudate per 10cm² over a 24-hour period, whereas an equivalent market-leading brand was shown to manage 24.1g of exudate per 10cm² over the same time period (AMS, data on file).

In vitro testing (AMS, data on file) also demonstrated the antimicrobial effectiveness of ActivHeal Aquafiber Ag (Table 2), showing sustained antimicrobial activity against a broad spectrum of microorganisms frequently associated with bacterial colonisation and infection over a 21-day period, which was superior to market-leading products in a similar dressing category.

Table 2: The sustained antimicrobial activity of Activheal Aquafiber Ag

Bacteria	ACTIVHEAL AQUAFIBER AG		
	7 days	14 days	21 days
MRSE	✓	✓	✓
MRSA	✓	✓	✓
VRE	✓	✓	✓
S. Pyogenes	✓	✓	✓
S. Epidermis	✓	✓	✓
E. Coli	✓	✓	✓
C. Albicans	✓	✓	✓

ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF USING THE ACTIVHEAL RANGE

When NHS Trusts began using the ActivHeal range following its launch in 2004, each Trust was found to have saved approximately £25,000 per annum on its dressing spend (House of Commons Health Committee, 2006). For example, ActivHeal Hydrogel (15g) is priced at £1.41, which is £0.51 lower in cost than the next branded alternative (Drug Tariff, 2017).

East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust conducted a wound care audit to identify appropriate usage and highlight possible cost-saving initiatives. It developed a wound care formulary to assist

nurses in making appropriate dressing choices, which included making ActivHeal a first-line dressing. As a result, the Trust was able to save over £25,000 in the first year of implementing the new formulary (Hawkins, 2010), with savings continuing into the second year.

University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust set up a three-month trial to assess the clinical performance of ActivHeal dressings and to measure the cost savings that could be made by switching to this range (Lewis, 2009). The dressings were rated by clinicians as 'better than' or 'equivalent to' the original branded dressings in almost all cases, and an equivalent yearly cost saving of £55,221 (54% of the hospital's total spend on dressings) was made. Two years after the trial ended, annual savings of £50,000 in wound dressings continued to be made.

Educational support

ActivHeal support clinicians to make informed decisions by providing high levels of education. This comes in different tiers and formats, ranging from basic simplified guides through to University-approved education. In addition, ActivHeal provides online education platforms, which allows clinicians to undertake the course, test their competency and then receive a CPD certificate to help support with their revalidation/Continuing Professional Development. This can be found at www.activheal.com. A generic wound care pocket guide provides a lot of information in one place, whilst being small enough to carry around in a pocket or diary.

The ActivHeal range in summary

If you were to explain to a colleague why you have chosen to use the ActivHeal range, what would you give as the main benefits?

- The dressings in the ActivHeal range have been demonstrated to be clinically effective, whilst allowing healthcare facilities to make significant savings compared to equivalent branded products, with no impact on patient outcomes.
- ActivHeal provides a comprehensive and easy-to-use selection of dressings, to support healing in all acute and chronic wound types.
- The clear, colour-coded packaging aids appropriate dressing selection and saves time.
- Focused wound care training and online assessment programmes to assist in delivering the best clinical outcomes and patient care, while supporting clinicians in their continuing professional development (CPD).

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