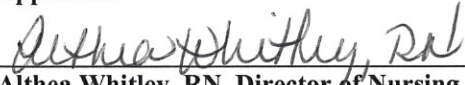
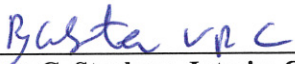




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<b>Policy # 9014</b>	<b>Topical Medication Application</b>
<b>Origination Date: March 1998</b>	
<b>Revision Date: June 2004; March 27, 2006; February 8, 2009, April 5, 2012</b>	
<b>Reviewed Date: February 2005; July 20, 2007; May 20, 2010, May 8, 2013, July 25, 2016</b>	
<b>Approved:</b>	
 Althea Whitley, RN, Director of Nursing	 Bryan G. Stephens, Interim CEO

**PURPOSE:**

To ensure that prescribed topical medications for clients are applied by licensed staff or the client in a manner that provides the most safe and effective use of the medication.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. Gather supplies and ensure client's understanding of procedure.
2. Wash hands prior to procedure and apply gloves.
3. Remove clothing from affected area and position client for safety and modesty.
4. Medication quantity is determined by the body area to be covered. A unit of measurement, Fingertip Unit (FTU), is the amount of ointment or cream squeezed from a tube with a 5mm nozzle onto the palm or surface of the first joint of the index finger from the tip of the finger to the crease. This measurement system is documented in Clinical Experience in Dermatology, 1991, 16:444-447, Long, et al.
5. The amount of medication in FTUs that is needed is determined by the body chart in Attachment A. If the affected areas are scattered or do not involve a whole area, FTUs can be approximated by measuring by hand area (palm flat with fingers together). Two hand areas require one FTU.
6. Wash affected skin area with soap and warm water. Squeeze required amount of medication from tube into a medication cup or onto a 2 x 2 gauze pad and then apply gently using gloved finger or clean cotton swab or clean gauze pad evenly to affected area.
7. Cover affected area with bandage only if instructed by prescribing MD, otherwise do not cover area.
8. Wash your hands after applying the medication and removing gloves.
9. Document in medication record. Notify nurse if condition worsens or, does not improve within 3 days of use. Worsening may include increased pain, itching, redness or increased size of affected area.
10. Keep medication away from the eyes. Try to avoid inhaling sprays and powders.

## Fingertip Unit Requirements by Body Area

