

Notes in Diathermy

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What are the risks of diathermy?

The electromagnetic energy used in shortwave and microwave diathermy can cause extreme heat in metal devices such as:

1. bone pins
2. dental fillings
3. metal sutures

This could cause burns in the tissue near the implant. The procedure should not be used over these areas to avoid the risk of burning.

During diathermy treatment, you become a part of the electrical field. Touching a bare metal object, including a metal part of the diathermy cabinet, can cause a shock or burn.

Diathermy should be avoided over open growth plates in children.

You may not be an appropriate candidate for this treatment if you have:

1. cancer
2. reduced skin sensation
3. peripheral vascular disease
4. tissue with restricted blood supply (ischemia)
5. infections
6. fractured or broken bones
7. bleeding disorders
8. severe heart, liver, or kidney conditions
9. low skin sensation
10. pregnancy
11. perspiration
12. Wound dressing

Diathermy is not considered safe for certain areas of the body. These include:

1. eyes
2. brain
3. ears
4. spinal cord
5. heart
6. reproductive organs
7. genitalia

What are the steps of treatment:

For ultrasound diathermy, the therapist applies a gel to the affected area of your body. In shortwave and microwave diathermy, gel is not used, and the affected area may be wrapped in a towel to avoid direct contact between the skin and the electrodes.

During shortwave and microwave diathermy, two electrodes are positioned near the affected area. In ultrasound diathermy, a therapist moves a wand continuously over the affected area.

You must remain still while the treatment is being administered.

You may feel a warm or tingling sensation during the treatment, or you may feel nothing at all.