



Making a Material Difference®

Foam or Gel for Patient Positioning

What does the evidence say?



One of the biggest responsibilities of the operating room (OR) team is to ensure patient safety. There are many facets to patient safety in the OR. Safe patient positioning is a critical facet since the patient is unable to tell you if they are in pain or uncomfortable. The first step to improved outcomes related to patient positioning is to look to the evidence for guidance when choosing your positioning device. There are extrinsic and intrinsic factors that contribute to the development of pressure injuries (PI) in the OR, one of the extrinsic factors is prolonged surface interface pressure. In this week’s blog we will look at a scientific comparison between foam and gel used as positioning devices in order to determine best practice.

Pressure redistribution is key to decrease pressure injuries in the OR, unfortunately foam devices produce only a minimum amount of pressure redistribution and often allow the patient to “bottom out” as Macky (2006) explains. Bottoming out occurs when the support surface becomes fully compressed under the weight of the patient’s body, resulting in the patient lying directly on a hard surface.



After looking at the literature and the latest AORN guidelines, it is easy to see that gel positioning devices can create better outcomes for your patients. When a change in practice is needed, look to the evidence and let that be your guide.

FACT 1

Sutton, Link, and Makic (2013) found that additional padding with convoluted foam (e.g. egg crate) padding did not reduce the pressure; however, gel (i.e. viscoelastic polymer) padding provided better protection from excessive pressure.

FACT 2

McNichol, Watts, Mackey, Beitz and Gray (2015) tell us, “There is a lack of evidence that exists regarding the optimal foam density and indentation load deflection for preventing pressure injury in perioperative patients.” That is scary since we cannot gauge which patient benefits from foam and which patient does not.

FACT 3

AORN reports in the 2020 Guideline for Positioning the Patient (7.5) that static surfaces such as viscoelastic polymer (i.e. gel) overlays are designed to reduce shearing and to support the patient’s weight without becoming fully compressed under the weight of the patient’s body. Gel overlays and positioning devices are radiolucent, latex-free, and reusable. Thus, among other benefits, gel is a good solution to the “bottom out” effect that causes undue pressure and shear.

To see our complete list of References: <https://www.actionproducts.com/blog/Foam-or-Gel-for-Patient-Position--What-does-the-Evidence-Say/>



In your search for gel positioning products, we hope you’ll choose Action®.

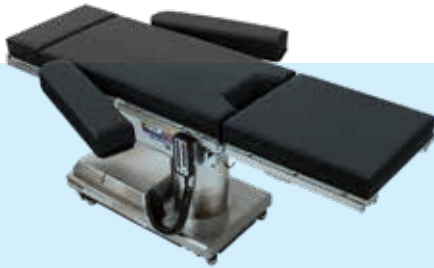
The Action® brand is synonymous with clinically engineered quality. Ours is a name you can trust for head-to-toe pressure protection, in and out of the Operating Room. The key element in our products is an exclusive material called AKTON® Viscoelastic polymer. It looks and feels like a gel, but is more body friendly. It does not leak, flow or bottom out and is repairable! The film is tissue equivalent, and together with the polymer, creates the most shear resistant product on the market today.



Making a Material Difference®

Action® Support Surfaces & Positioners

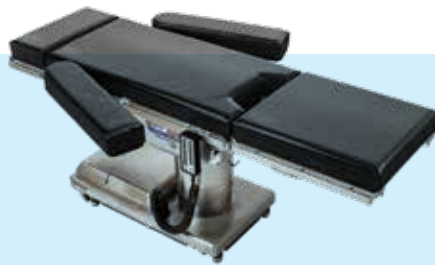
Pressure Management Performance and Clinically Engineered Infection Control



Performance Table Pad

Our durable, most popular series for high turnover Operating Rooms

A continuous layer of exclusive AKTON® viscoelastic polymer maximizes pressure redistribution and prevents capillary closure.



Performance Plus Table Pad

Our top-of-the-line series.

The exposed AKTON® polymer surface provides a shear benefit that is unparalleled in the industry. Excellent redistribution of pressure and heat.

▶ See our **Support Surface Brochure** for more detailed information on our full range of table pads.

Benefits you can expect from every Action® support surface:

- Clinically Engineered Infection Control Design
- Imaging Compatible
- Meets ergonomic weight limits for hospital staff
- Latex, Silicone and Plasticizer Free
- Static resistive
- Easy to clean
- CAL133 compliant



We can fabricate replacement pads to fit your specifications.

Call customer service **800.228.7763** or **301.797.1414**, or email service@actionproducts.com

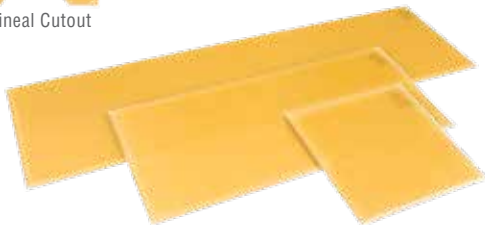
- Available in multiple thicknesses
- Coordinating armboards available
- Table Pads for all major Brands



3-piece Set



Perineal Cutout



Small, Medium, and Full Length

Overlays

Suggested for all surgical procedures

The Action® Overlay provides pressure, weight and temperature redistribution in a simple, easy to use and clean design. It is especially important for use in procedures lasting more than one hour or for patients with skin integrity or circulatory problems.

All products made in the USA with our exclusive AKTON® polymer gel.



Questions?

A friendly customer service representative can help.

Call 800.228.7763 or 301.797.1414
or email service@actionproducts.com

