

Absorbent Cotton Quality Performance

Technical Feature	BP Requirement	Importance	Robinson Healthcare Product	Compliant
Water Holding Capacity (g/g)	Min 23g/g	High absorbency is essential for cotton wool otherwise it cannot work effectively at absorbing fluids or exudate.	25-30g/g	✓
Sinking Time (seconds)	10 secs maximum	The cotton wool must also be able to absorb fluids very quickly in order to perform effectively and draw exudate from the wound site.	< 5 secs	✓
Ave Fibre Length	Not less than 10mm	Fibre length can indicate the quality of cotton wool and how heavily processed it is. Short fibre lengths can weaken the cotton wool and can cause dust when shaken, or lead to excessive linting.	> 10mm	✓
Neps	Not more than European Pharmacopoeia sample	Neps are microscopic balls of entangled cotton fibres. A high number gives the cotton wool a poor appearance and a rough feel.	In accordance with European Pharmacopoeia (EP)	✓
Trash Content	Traces only	Trash consists of contaminants such as natural leaf, stalk, husk and cotton seeds. This can scratch delicate skin and gives a poor appearance.	Traces only	✓
pH Level	Neither strongly acidic or alkaline	To prevent potential skin irritation, the pH level should be within neutral limits, making the cotton wool mild to the skin. Strongly Acidic or Alkaline pH levels can be created by poor processing when bleaching.	Within neutral limits of pH 5-8	✓
Surface Active Agents	Max 2mm of froth when cotton sample agitated with water in BP test	Surface active agents can cause skin irritation when present. Cotton wool is generally used next to or close to the skin and so the presence of surface active agents should be eliminated if possible.	Nil	✓
Micronaire	Acceptable softness only	Micronaire indicates cotton thickness. Thick fibres give the cotton wool a coarse feel in use. A reading of 5 or less can be considered acceptable.	3.2-4	✓