

Hydroquinone

Medication Information Leaflet

What is this medication for?

This medication is used to lighten areas of darkened skin. It reduces the amount of brown pigments (melanin) produced in your skin.

This medication may come in different combinations with other additives such as topical steroid and topical tretinoin.

How should I use this medication?

- 1. Wash your skin with cleanser, rinse and pat dry
- 2. Wash your hands before applying the medication
- 3. Apply a thin layer on the affected areas according to your doctor's instructions
- 4. Wash your hands after applying the medication
- Avoid applying the medication too near your eyes, mouth and nose as it may cause irritation
- Flush the area thoroughly with water if the medication accidentally gets into your eyes, mouth and nose
- You may use a moisturizer to help avoid skin dryness. When using moisturizers, sunscreens, cosmetics and other topical preparations together with the hydroquinone cream, apply them in the sequence as instructed by your doctor. Wait approximately 3 to 4 minutes before applying the next product.
- Do not use the medicine on skin that is inflamed, irritated, infected or sunburned. It should be treated first before using this medication.

What should I do if I forget to use this medication?

If you forgot to apply a dose of this medication, apply it as soon as you remember. Skip the dose if it is almost time for the next dose. Apply your next dose at the usual time. Do not apply two doses to make up for the missed dose.

What precautions should I take?

Inform your healthcare professional if:

- You are allergic to this medication or any of the other ingredients of this medication or have sulfite allergy
- You are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding
- You have asthma or any other skin conditions (e.g. eczema, psoriasis)
- You are on ultraviolet light therapy, sun lamps or tanning bed.
 - Avoid prolonged exposure to sunlight or ultraviolet light to prevent re-pigmentation from occurring. Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen product with Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 30 and wear protective clothing when you are exposed to direct sunlight.

Prolonged use of hydroquinone has been associated with the development of exogenous ochronosis (a persistent blue-black pigmentation). Therefore, please use as instructed by your doctor and stop after you have achieved the desired lightening effect.

What are some common side-effects of this medication?

Certain side effects of this medicine are common and may even disappear during treatment. If any of the following side effects on the sites of application do not go away or are severe, please consult your doctor:

- Itching
- Dryness
- Peeling
- Mild burning
- Redness
- Stinging sensation

What are some rare but serious side-effects that I need to seek medical advice immediately?

The symptoms of a drug allergy include one or more of the following:

- Swollen face/eyes/lips/tongue
- Difficulty in breathing
- Itchy skin rashes over your whole body

If you experience any of the following side effects on the sites of application, please consult your doctor immediately:

- Acne
- Blisters
- Crusting on skin
- Oozing from skin
- Scaling skin

- Severe burning sensation
- Severe dryness
- Severe irritation or itching
- Stretch marks
- Swelling
- Tiny red lines or blood vessels showing through the skin (telangiectasia)
- Unusual skin coloration

If you experience any of these symptoms, you should stop your medication and see your healthcare professional immediately.

How should I store this medication?

Store in a cool and dry place, away from direct sunlight. Keep this medication away from children.

For Tri-Luma: Store in the refrigerator between 2-8°C. Do not freeze.

How should I throw away this medication safely?

Pack this medication into a black trash bag and seal it tightly before throwing into the rubbish chute or bin.

Disclaimers

If you take more than the recommended dose, please seek medical advice immediately. The information provided on this page does not replace information from your healthcare professional. Please consult your healthcare professional for more information.

This article is jointly developed by members of the National Medication Information workgroup. The workgroup consists of cluster partners (National Healthcare Group, National University Health System and SingHealth), community pharmacies (Guardian, Unity and Watsons) and Pharmaceutical Society of Singapore.

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