

Non-Steroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (topical)

Medication Information Leaflet

What is this medication for?

Topical Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are a group of medications commonly used to treat pain and reduce inflammation. They are commonly used for muscle and joint pain or swelling. They are available as either a gel, cream or patch.

Examples of topical NSAIDs available without requiring a prescription include Diclofenac, Flurbiprofen, Ketoprofen and Piroxicam.

How should I take/use this medication?

For creams or gels, apply a thin layer on the affected area and gently rub it into the skin as required 2 or 3 times a day.

For plasters, apply 1 plaster on the affected area as required. Each plaster will last for 12 hours. The plasters are not waterproof.

Do not exceed the frequency of use recommended by the manufacturer.

Do not apply BOTH the cream or gel and the plaster on the same area of skin.

Avoid applying the medication on irritated or broken skin and areas near the eyes, mouth, nose and genitals.

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

As topical NSAIDs are used frequently or when needed to relieve pain and swelling, it is not necessary to apply it on a fixed schedule. Please check with your healthcare professional if you are unsure.

What precautions should I take?

Inform your healthcare professional if:

- You are allergic to this medication, any of the other ingredients of this medication, sunblocks or perfumes.

- You are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding.
- You have a history of photosensitivity reaction (redness and inflammation of sun-exposed skin).

Do not use any airtight bandage or dressing over the area of application. This may increase the risk of side effects.

What are some common side-effects of this medication?

- Topical NSAIDs are usually well-tolerated. Common side effects may include mild redness and irritation at the area on which the medication is applied.
 - This will usually go away after some time. Stop your medication and consult a healthcare professional if the side effects persist

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
- The area which the medication is applied to appears itchy, swollen and blistering following exposure to the sun

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

If you did not experience improvement in pain or it worsens after 7 days of treatment, your condition may be too serious for self-treatment. You should also consult a healthcare professional.

What food or medication should I avoid when I take this medication?

Do not use any airtight bandages or dressing over the area of application. This may increase the risk of side effects.

How should I store this medication?

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

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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