

# Topical Acne Preparations

Medication Information Leaflet

## What is this medication for?

Your doctor has prescribed one of the following medications for you to treat acne:

### Topical Antibiotics

- Erythromycin
- Clindamycin
- Clindamycin with benzoyl peroxide

These medications work by killing the bacteria that cause acne.

### Other topical acne preparations

- Benzoyl peroxide
- Resorcinol / Sulphur
- Azelaic acid
- Salicylic acid

These medications work by removing the dead skin cells (exfoliating) and clearing blocked pores. Benzoyl peroxide can also help to kill the bacteria that cause acne.

This medication may also be used for other conditions as determined by your doctor.

## How should I use this medication?

- Wash your skin with cleanser, rinse and pat dry
- Wash your hands before and after applying the medication
- Apply enough medication on the affected areas according to your doctor's instructions.
- For medications that are in the liquid form and comes in a bottle with an applicator tip, you may either
  - Dab the applicator directly on the affected areas
  - Dab the applicator onto your clean fingertips and transfer it to the affected areas
- Avoid applying the medication on broken skin or too near to 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

- For benzoyl peroxide: Avoid contact with hair or coloured clothing as it may cause bleaching

## **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 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.
- Avoid washing your face too often as this may increase the drying-out effect of your topical acne preparation. Wash your face 2 to 3 times a day only.
- Avoid applying heavy make-up and using oily cosmetics. It is recommended to choose make-up products with non-oily formulas.
- Avoid staying directly under sunlight for long durations. 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.
- These medications do not work immediately. You may need to apply the medication for a few weeks to see an improvement in your condition.

## **What are some common side-effects of this medication?**

The following side effects are common during the start of the treatment. Consult your doctor immediately if any of the following side effects do not go away or are severe.

- Mild stinging or burning sensation
- Dryness and peeling of the skin
  - You can apply moisturisers after applying the medication

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

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

- Blistering
- Burning
- Crusting
- Itch
- Swelling

## What medication should I avoid when I use this medication?

Do not apply benzoyl peroxide together at the same time as topical tretinoin as it will reduce the effectiveness of topical tretinoin.

## 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.*

*Last reviewed on May 2020*