

Topical Steroids

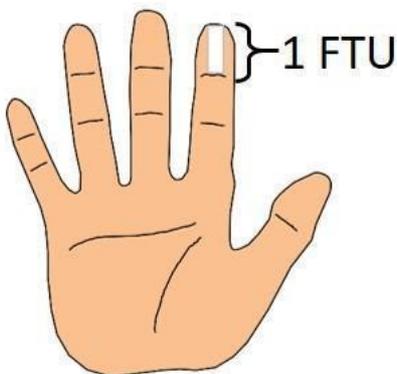
Medication Information Leaflet

What is this medication for?

Topical steroids are applied to the skin to relieve skin conditions like swelling, redness, inflammation, itch and allergic reactions.

How should I take/use this medication?

- Steroid creams and ointments (topical steroids) should only be applied directly to the affected areas of the skin. Follow the instructions on your medicine label for information on how often you should apply the topical steroid.
- Apply a thin layer to the affected area and stop using when there are no more symptoms. Applying too much topical steroid may increase the risk of getting side effects, while using too little may decrease the effectiveness of the medication.
- Do not bandage or cover the area after applying the medicine unless directed by the doctor. Occlusive dressing (airtight covering) may increase the amount of steroid absorbed through the skin and increase the risk of side effects.
- One fingertip unit (FTU) is the amount of cream or ointment, squeezed out of a tube (with a standard 5 mm nozzle), from the tip of an adult's index finger to the first crease of that finger.
- One FTU (about 0.5 grams) is enough to treat an area of skin two times the size of the adult's hand. You may use this as a guide to decide the correct amount of cream or ointment to apply on the affected area.
- A single 15 grams tube of cream or ointment contains about 30 FTUs.



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

If you forget to use the medication, apply the missed dose as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for your next application, only apply the usual amount. Do not double the amount of cream/ointment or apply extra medication to make up for the missed application.

What precautions should I take?

Inform your healthcare professional if:

- You are allergic to these medications or any of the other ingredients of these medications

Do not use these medications for long periods of time unless instructed by your doctor. Follow your doctor's instructions for how long to use it for.

Topical steroids are different in their effectiveness. Stronger steroids should be avoided on parts of the body where the skin is thinner or more delicate such as the face. If you need to use different types of topical steroids, follow the instructions on the medication labels. The instructions will give you information on which part of the body the topical steroids can be used on.

What are some common side-effects of this medication?

Side effects, such as thinning of the skin, reddish stretch marks and acne can occur if too much topical steroids are used incorrectly for a long period of time.

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

- Pain, swelling or skin condition gets worse after using the medication

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 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.

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. The content does not reflect drug availability and supply information in pharmacies and healthcare institutions. You are advised to check with the respective institutions for such information.

Last updated on Apr 2021