

Hydrocortisone Cream 1%

Hydrocortisone acetate

Presentation

Topical cream: Hydrocortisone 1%, as the acetate, is a smooth white viscous cream.

Uses

Actions

When applied topically, hydrocortisone diffuses across cell membranes to form complexes with specific cytoplasmic receptors. These complexes enter the cell nucleus, bind to DNA, and stimulate transcription of messenger RNA and subsequent protein synthesis of enzymes responsible for anti-inflammatory effects, including inhibition of oedema, fibrin deposition, capillary dilation, and movements of phagocytes. Later stages of inflammation such as capillary production, collagen deposition, and keloid formation are also inhibited.

At a concentration of 1%, topically applied hydrocortisone has been found to bring about both subjective and objective improvements, usually within one week and often as soon as 24 to 48 hours after initiation of therapy. Systemic effects from prolonged external application of large amounts of hydrocortisone to wide areas of damaged skin have been minimal. Adrenal axis suppression has not been observed.

Pharmacokinetics

Following topical application, hydrocortisone diffuses through the skin by both transfollicular and transepidermal routes. Absorption varies according to anatomic site of application and ranges from 1% (forearm skin) to 26-29% (mucous membranes). Factors influencing penetration include concentration, vehicle, anatomic site, age, condition of the skin, and occlusion. The plasma level of hydrocortisone falls to 50% of its initial concentration in 90 minutes; the biological half life of hydrocortisone is 8 to 12 hours. Biotransformation takes place primarily in the skin, and for any amount absorbed systemically, in the liver. 0.2% to 1.0% of hydrocortisone appeared in the urine over 10 days after topical application of C-14 radiolabelled hydrocortisone to normal skin.

Indications

Hydrocortisone is indicated for the relief of the inflammatory and pruritic manifestations of corticosteroid responsive dermatoses.

Dosage and Administration

A thin film should be applied to the affected area three to four times daily.

Contraindications

Hydrocortisone is contraindicated in patients with a history of hypersensitivity to the product or any of its constituent ingredients, patients with tuberculosis or fungal infection and/or herpes infections of the eyes, lips, or genitals.

Warnings and Precautions

Although extensive use of hydrocortisone has not revealed evidence that enough hydrocortisone is absorbed to have systemic effects, greater absorption because of misuse or individual variability or unusual sensitivity could lead, at least theoretically, to a systemic effect.

Patients are advised to contact their physician if the condition under treatment worsens or if symptoms persist for more than seven days or if symptoms clear and occur again within a few days.

Hydrocortisone is not recommended for use in children under two years of age.

Hydrocortisone should not be used for external feminine itching if a vaginal discharge is present. It is not to be used for external anal itching if bleeding is present.

Contact with the eyes should be avoided.

Hydrocortisone should not be used under waterproof dressings unless advised to do so by a physician.

Hydrocortisone should not be used to treat acne.

If the product is applied with the fingertips, hands should be washed afterwards.

Use during Pregnancy and Lactation

The safety of this medicinal product for use during human pregnancy or during lactation has not been established.

Hydrocortisone should only be used during pregnancy or lactation if recommended by a physician.

Adverse Effects

The safety profile of topically applied hydrocortisone preparations has been established through over 40 years of marketing experience. Topically applied hydrocortisone generally does not produce systemic effects due to minimal absorption. Absorption increases in the presence of skin inflammation or with the use of occlusive agents. Certain local effects such as skin atrophy may arise with prolonged use because of the antimitotic/antisyntetic effect of hydrocortisone on cells. Clinically detectable atrophy rarely occurs with hydrocortisone in concentrations available without prescription (0.5%, 1.0%).

Interactions

There are currently no known drug interactions associated with the topical application of hydrocortisone.

Overdosage

There is no specific overdosage syndrome associated with the use of topical hydrocortisone. No specific antidote is available. Treatment of acute oral overdose consists of dilution with fluids.

Pharmaceutical Precautions

Store below 25 degrees celsius.

Medicines Classification

Pharmacist Only Medicine.

Package Quantities

Hydrocortisone is available in tubes of 14.2g and 30g.

Further Information

Nil.

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