

PHOLCODINE

What is in this leaflet

The medicine you have purchased contains pholcodine.

This leaflet is intended to provide information on the active ingredient pholcodine, which is contained in many different medicines. The packaging of the medicine you have bought should be read carefully. This leaflet provides additional information on pholcodine.

Please follow the instructions on the packaging of the medicine you purchased and in this leaflet before you start using pholcodine.

This leaflet answers some common questions about pholcodine. It does not contain all the available information. It does not take the place of talking to your doctor or pharmacist.

All medicines have risks and benefits.

If you have any concerns about using this medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Keep this leaflet with the medicine. You may need to read it again.

What pholcodine is used for

Pholcodine is used to relieve dry coughs.

Pholcodine is a cough suppressant that works selectively on the cough centre in the brain to control and help stop coughing.

Pholcodine does not cause an excited state when taking the recommended dose. There is no evidence of physical dependence after prolonged use.

There may be more than one active ingredient in your medicine, such as an anti-inflammatory, an antiseptic, a nasal decongestant or an antihistamine. If you are taking more than one cough and cold medicine, please read the packaging of each

medicine carefully to ensure you are not taking the same active ingredient from 2 or more medicines. Taking the same active ingredient from more than one medicine could mean you are taking too much of that active ingredient.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions about pholcodine.

Before you use pholcodine

When you must not use it

Do not use pholcodine:

- if you have severe asthma or other serious lung problems.
- in a child under 6 years of age.
- if you are allergic to pholcodine or any of the other ingredients listed on the packaging of the medicine you have bought.

Some of the symptoms of an allergic reaction may include:

- shortness of breath.
- wheezing or difficulty breathing.
- swelling of the face, lips, tongue or other parts of the body.
- rash, itching or hives on the skin.

Do not take this medicine after the expiry date printed on the pack or if the packaging is torn or shows signs of tampering.

If it has expired or is damaged, return it to your pharmacist for disposal.

If you are not sure whether you should start using pholcodine, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

Before you start to use it

Tell your pharmacist or doctor if you have allergies to any medicines, foods, preservatives or dyes.

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before taking pholcodine if you have or have had any of the following:

- asthma
- any other respiratory (breathing) conditions

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.

Your pharmacist or doctor will discuss the benefits and possible risks of taking pholcodine during pregnancy.

Ask your pharmacist or doctor about taking pholcodine if you are breastfeeding.

It is not known if pholcodine passes into the breast milk. Your pharmacist or doctor will discuss the potential benefits and risks of taking pholcodine if you are breastfeeding.

Do not use pholcodine in children under 6 years of age. Ask your doctor or pharmacist before using pholcodine in children aged 6-12 years.

If you have not told your pharmacist or doctor about any of the above, tell him/her before you start taking pholcodine.

Taking other medicines

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any other medicines, including any that you get without a prescription from your pharmacy, supermarket or health food shop.

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any other cough and cold medicines.

You should also tell any health professional who is prescribing a new medication for you that you are taking pholcodine.

Some medicines and pholcodine may interfere with each other. These include:

- medicines used to help you relax or sleep (sedatives).
- medicines used to control anxiety.
- alcohol.

Your doctor or pharmacist will have more information on medicines to be careful with or avoid while taking pholcodine.

How to use pholcodine

Follow any directions given to you by your pharmacist or doctor carefully.

They may differ from the information contained in this leaflet.

Read the packaging and this leaflet carefully before taking pholcodine. If you do not understand the instructions on the packaging, ask your pharmacist for help.

How much to take

Follow the instructions on the packaging of the product you have purchased.

You may also wish to discuss how much to take and when to take it with your pharmacist or doctor.

Do not take more than the recommended daily dose.

Pholcodine may be given to children aged 6 - 12 years when purchased from a Pharmacy and under the advice of a pharmacist; follow their instructions carefully.

Do not use this medicine in children under 6 years of age.

If the symptoms persist for more than a few days, or worsen, consult your doctor or pharmacist.

If you forget to take it

Take it as soon as you remember, and then go back to taking your medicine as you would normally.

Do not take a double dose to make up for the dose that you missed.
This may increase the chance of you getting an unwanted side effect.

If you are not sure what to do, ask your pharmacist or doctor.

While you are using pholcodine

Things you must do

Talk to your pharmacist or doctor if your symptoms do not improve.
Your pharmacist or doctor will assess your condition and decide if you should continue to take the medicine.

If you are about to be started on any new medicine tell your doctor or pharmacist that you are taking pholcodine.

Things you must not do

Do not give pholcodine to anyone else, even if they have the same condition as you.

Do not take pholcodine to treat any other complaints unless your pharmacist or doctor tells you to.

Do not take more than the recommended dose unless your doctor tells you to.

Things to be careful of

Be careful driving or operating machinery until you know how pholcodine affects you.

Pholcodine may cause dizziness in some people. If this happens, do not drive or operate machinery.

In case of overdose

If you take too much (overdose)

Immediately telephone your doctor or the National Poisons Information Centre (telephone 0800 POISON or 0800 764 766) for advice, or go to your nearest Accident and Emergency Centre, if you think you or anyone else may have taken too much pholcodine. Do this even if there are no signs of discomfort or poisoning.

You may need medical attention.

Keep telephone numbers for these places handy.

If you are not sure what to do, contact your pharmacist, midwife or doctor.

Side Effects

Tell your doctor or pharmacist as soon as possible if you do not feel well while you are using pholcodine.

Pholcodine helps most people with a cough, but it may have unwanted side effects in a few people. All medicines can have side effects. Sometimes they are serious, most of the time they are not. You may need medical treatment if you get some of the side effects.

Do not be alarmed by the following list of side effects. You may not experience any of them.

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions or concerns.

If you experience any of the following stop using the medicine and seek immediate medical help:

- shortness of breath
- wheezing or difficulty breathing

- swelling of the face, lips, tongue or other parts of the body
- rash, itching or hives on the skin

The list above includes very serious side effects. You may need urgent medical attention or hospitalisation. These side effects are very rare.

Tell your pharmacist or doctor as soon as possible if you notice any of the following:

- lack of co-ordination and unsteadiness when walking
- unusual mood swings

The list above included serious side effects that may require medical attention. Serious side effects are rare.

Tell your pharmacist or doctor if you notice any of the following and they worry you:

- dizziness
- drowsiness
- nausea and vomiting
- stomach pain
- constipation

The list above includes more common side effects. They are usually mild.

Tell your pharmacist or doctor if you notice anything that is making you feel unwell.

Other adverse effects not listed above may also occur in some people.

After using pholcodine

Storage

Keep your medicine in the original pack until it is time to take it.

Keep your medicine in a cool, dry place. Do not store above the temperature shown on the packaging.

Do not store any medicine in the bathroom or near a sink. Do not leave it on a window sill or in the car.

Heat and dampness can destroy some medicines.

Keep it out of sight and where children cannot reach it.

A locked cupboard at least one-and-a-half metres above the ground is a good place to store medicines.

Disposal

Ask your pharmacist what to do with any medicine that is left over, or if the expiry date has passed.

Product description

Pholcodine is available in a number of medicines used to treat coughs and colds. It may be contained in tablets, capsules, lozenges or liquids. Always read the packaging of the medicine you have purchased carefully to see which ingredients it contains.

Date of Preparation

This leaflet was prepared on 21 December 2010.

This leaflet was prepared under the guidance of the New Zealand Self-Medication Industry (NZSMI):

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Should you have any questions regarding the product you have purchased, please contact your doctor, pharmacist or the manufacturer (contact details should be provided on the packaging of the medicine you have purchased).