

## HOW TO APPLY OINTMENT

An **ointment** is a homogeneous, viscous, semi-solid preparation, most commonly greasy, thick oil (oil 80% - water 20%) with a high viscosity that is intended for external application to the skin or mucous membranes as a remedy or for soothing an irritation. Also, they are used as emollients or for the application of active ingredients to the skin for protective, therapeutic, or prophylactic purposes and where a degree of occlusion is desired.

Ointments are usually very moisturizing, and good for dry skin. They have a low risk of sensitization due to having few ingredients beyond the base oil or fat, and low irritation risk.

- The first time you take the cap off the cream or ointment you may find the end of the tube is sealed. You can pierce this seal by inverting the cap of the tube and pushing it into the end of the tube.
- Wash the affected area(s) of skin well and rinse away all traces of cleanser.
- Pat the skin dry rather than rubbing it.
- Apply the cream or ointment thinly and evenly to the affected area(s).
- Gently massage the cream or ointment into the skin until it has all disappeared.
- Replace the cap on the tube.
- Wash your hands after applying the cream or ointment, unless the hands are the affected area.

### Other Needful Reminders:

- If you have other creams, ointments or lotions to use on the same area of skin you should try and leave about half an hour between applying each one so that they don't mix on the skin.
- Only use the ointment on the affected areas of skin. Never use them as moisturizers.
- Do not use it on the face unless advised to do so by your doctor. If it is to be used on the face, they should be used for no more than five to seven days. Ensure the product does not get in the eyes.
- There will be more medicine absorbed from raw skin, thin skin, the face and genitals, and areas of skin that rub together, such as beneath the breasts or between the buttocks, so take extra care to apply thinly if applying creams or ointments to these areas.
- Over-use of any cream or ointment, especially for long periods on large areas of skin, can result in too much medicine being absorbed into the body. This may lead to thinning or weakening of the skin or other side effects. Consult your doctor if you experience skin irritation or any other unusual effects.
- Certain topical preparations can stain both the skin and clothes. To prevent the latter, a clean cloth or cotton bandage can be placed over the affected area. However, don't cover the area with airtight dressings unless directed by your doctor, as these can increase the absorption of the steroid into the body.

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- Creams and ointments are designed only for application to the skin. If they are accidentally taken by mouth, tell your doctor at once.
- If you get the cream or ointment in your eye, rinse it out immediately with warm water and consult your doctor if there is any on-going irritation.
- Always follow the advice on the printed label of the tube/box and/or as directed by your doctor or pharmacist.
- If you forget to apply your cream or ointment, apply the correct dose when you remember, and then carry on as before.
- Do not use your cream or ointment after the expiry date on the tube because it may be contaminated with germs.
- Don't give your medicines to anyone else to use, even if they have the same symptoms as you. They may be harmful to other people.
- Always keep medicines out of the reach of children.