Ichthammol

Ichthammol can help to reduce itching associated with eczema.

Apply it as directed by your doctor - this is usually one, two or three times a day. Preparations contain wool fat (lanolin). If you are allergic to lanolin, make sure your doctor knows about this.

About ichthammol

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of medicine</th>
<th>A skin preparation for eczema</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used for</td>
<td>Lichenified eczema</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available as</td>
<td>Ointment and bandages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eczema is sometimes called dermatitis, which means inflammation of the skin. When you have eczema, areas of your skin become red, inflamed and itchy. If you then scratch a lot, it can cause patches of your skin to become thickened over time. This is called lichenification. Corticosteroid ointments and creams are often used to treat these areas of thickened skin. Ointments or bandages containing ichthammol are sometimes applied over the corticosteroid, as they help to reduce itching.

Before using ichthammol

To make sure that this is the right treatment for you, before you start using ichthammol it is important that your doctor knows:

- If you have ever had an allergic reaction to a cream or ointment. This is because ichthammol preparations contain wool fat (lanolin).

How to use ichthammol

- Before you start the treatment, read the manufacturer’s printed information leaflet from the pack. It will give you more information about the product you have been supplied with.
- Use the preparation exactly as your doctor tells you to. Your doctor could ask you to apply the ichthammol one, two or three times a day.
- If you have been told to use a corticosteroid cream or ointment first, apply this and then cover the area with the ichthammol ointment and/or bandage.

Getting the most from your treatment

- Try not to get any of the ointment on areas of healthy skin, or on your clothes. Ichthammol can stain.
- Try as much as possible not to scratch. To help with this, keep your nails short, and if you need to relieve an itch, rub the area with your fingers rather than scratching.
- Try to avoid the things which you know trigger your eczema. This might be things like perfume, soaps, bubble baths, biological washing powders and fabric conditioners.
- Many people find it helps to wear smooth clothes next to their skin, rather than more irritating fabrics. Also, try to avoid getting too hot or too cold, as extremes of temperature can irritate your skin.
- Remember also to use an emollient regularly. You may need to use it several times a day if your skin is very dry. Your doctor will advise you on which emollient is best for you.

Can ichthammol cause problems?

Ichthammol is unlikely to cause side-effects unless you are allergic to one of the ingredients. If so, your skin may become irritated and you may develop a rash. If this happens, stop using it and speak with your doctor for further advice.

How to store ichthammol

- Keep all medicines out of the reach and sight of children.
- Store in a cool, dry place, away from direct heat and light.
Important information about all medicines

This preparation is for use on the skin only. If someone swallows some of it by accident, go to the accident and emergency department of your local hospital. Take the container with you, even if it is empty.

This medicine is for you. Never give it to other people even if their condition appears to be the same as yours.

Do not keep out-of-date or unwanted medicines. Take them to your local pharmacy which will dispose of them for you.

If you have any questions about this medicine ask your pharmacist.

Further reading & references


Disclaimer: This article is for information only and should not be used for the diagnosis or treatment of medical conditions. Patient Platform Limited has used all reasonable care in compiling the information but makes no warranty as to its accuracy. Consult a doctor or other healthcare professional for diagnosis and treatment of medical conditions. For details see our conditions.