

Topical Cortisone

Topical Cortisone:

You have been prescribed or advised to use a medication, which belongs to the class of drugs known as corticosteroids (or cortisone). Cortisone is a naturally produced hormone. The body makes cortisone continuously for maintenance of basic health. Cortisone is useful for skin conditions due to the effects described below:

- **Closes blood vessels** – reducing swelling and redness
- **Slows skin growth** – reduces scaling
- **Reduces inflammation**

Natural cortisone, when chemically altered, is made into many different types of cortisone, each with different effects. Cortisone used on the skin has been modified to **seven** different strengths.

What are the strengths?

All cortisones are not alike!!! It's important to know the strength of your medication. More potent cortisones may also cause more harmful effects. Also, different skin areas need different strength cortisone. Potent cortisones are needed for the thick skin of the palms and soles. The face, groin, and underarms have "thin skin" – powerful cortisones would damage these areas. Children have thin skin and need lower strength medications. It is our goal to use cortisone medicines carefully and for as short a period as possible in order to adequately treat your problem. It is important that you follow the recommended dosage schedule and take the medicine exactly as directed. Do not use this medicine without medical supervision.

The strength is determined by group ranking, NOT the percentage number.

Side Effects:

Side effects may occur when taking cortisone, and the longer it is taken, the more likely these side effects are to develop. Improper use of topical cortisones can create both harmful effects on the skin and harmful effects from absorption into the body. Some reactions to this medication are:

- Stretch marks
- Skin thinning
- Easy bruising
- Prominent small blood vessels
- Acne like rash
- Loss of pigment
- Facial hair/hair growth
- Increased pressure in the eye (glaucoma) and/or cataracts

Thin skin, like the face, groin, and underarm, is most susceptible. Improper use of the more powerful cortisones will allow the cortisone to be absorbed internally, cause an imbalance in the body's natural cortisone level.

Instructions:

Use your medication as described here. You will get the most benefit and less potential for problems.

DO NOT COVER the treated areas unless otherwise instructed by your physician.

Apply **only to rash ----- and sparingly!** Use just a thin layer. These medications are not moisturizers.

Stop using cortisone when instructed by the physician or sooner if the rashes clear. Do not keep using it to prevent the rash from returning.

The information provided in this handout is an educational summary and does not cover all possible actions, precautions, side effects, or risks. If you have any questions, please contact your physician office.