PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Benzocaine

This information from UpToDate® Lexidrug™ explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

Brand Names: US

Allevacaine [OTC]; Anacaine [DSC]; Anbesol Cold Sore Therapy [OTC]; Anbesol Maximum Strength [OTC] [DSC]; Baby Anbesol [OTC]; CankerMelts [OTC]; Cepacol INSTAMAX [OTC] [DSC]; GoodSense Oral Pain Relief [OTC]; HurriCaine One (Benzocaine) [OTC]; Hurricaine [OTC]; Hurricane Snap-n-Go [OTC] [DSC]; HurriPak Starter Kit [OTC] [DSC]; Instant Oral Pain Relief Max [OTC]; Ivy-Rid [OTC]; LolliCaine [OTC]; Medicaine/Sting & Bite Ampules [OTC]; Mucinex InstaSoothe Sore Thrt [OTC] [DSC]; Ora-film [OTC]; Zilactin Baby [OTC]

What is this drug used for?

All skin products:

- It is used to ease the pain caused by sunburn and skin irritation.
- It is used to relieve itching and pain from insect bites or skin irritation.

All oral products:

- It is used to treat mouth sores.
- It is used to treat canker sores.
- It is used to treat mouth irritation.
- It is used to ease mouth and throat pain.

For rectal use:

- It is used to treat signs of hemorrhoids or rectal irritation.

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

All products:

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If there is an infection where this drug will be used.

All oral products:

- If the patient is a child younger than 2 years of age. Do not give this drug to a child younger than 2 years of age. Do not use this drug for teething.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?

All products:

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- A severe blood problem called methemoglobinemia has happened with drugs like this one. The risk may be raised in people who have glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase (G6PD) deficiency, heart problems, or lung problems. The risk may also be raised while taking certain other drugs and in infants younger than 6 months of age. Tell your doctor if you have ever had

methemoglobinemia.

- Different brands of this drug may be for use in different ages of children. Talk with the doctor before giving this drug to a child.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan on getting pregnant, or are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to you and the baby.

All oral products:

- Do not eat while your mouth feels numb. You may bite your tongue.

Lozenge:

- If you have high blood sugar (diabetes), check labels closely. Some products have sugar.

Oral spray:

- Do not breathe in this drug. Breathing in this drug may cause harm or death.

All rectal and skin products:

- Protect clothing and fabrics from staining.
- This drug may cause harm if swallowed. If this drug is swallowed, call a doctor or poison control center right away.

Skin spray:

- Do not breathe in this drug. Breathing in this drug may cause harm or death.

What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?

WARNING/CAUTION: Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

All products:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Signs of methemoglobinemia like a blue or gray color of the lips, nails, or skin; a heartbeat that does not feel normal; seizures; severe dizziness or passing out; severe headache; feeling very sleepy; feeling tired or weak; or shortness of breath. This effect is rare but may be deadly if it happens.

For rectal use:

- Very bad bleeding from rectum or rectal pain.

All oral products:

- Very bad mouth pain.
- When treating a very sore throat, if signs last more than 2 days, or happen with fever, headache, rash, upset stomach, or throwing up.

What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

All products:

- Irritation where this drug was used.

All oral products:

- Mouth tingling.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at https://www.fda.gov/medwatch.

How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

All skin products:

- Do not take this drug by mouth. Use on your skin only. Keep out of your mouth, nose, and eyes (may burn).
- Wash your hands before and after use. If your hand is the treated area, do not wash your hand after use.
- Clean affected part before use. Make sure to dry well.
- Put a thin layer on the affected skin and rub in gently.
- This drug may catch on fire. Do not use near an open flame or while smoking.
- Use care when putting on a large part of the skin or where there are open wounds. Talk with the doctor.
- Do not use coverings (bandages, dressings) unless told to do so by the doctor.

Skin spray:

- Some of these drugs need to be shaken before use. Be sure you know if this product needs to be shaken before using it.

All oral products:

- Do not eat or drink for at least 1 hour after using.

Cream, gel, liquid, and ointment:

- Wash hands before and after use.
- Put a thin layer on the affected part.
- Keep out of your eyes.

Oral suspension:

- Shake well before use.
- Measure liquid doses carefully. Use the measuring device that comes with this drug. If there is none, ask the pharmacist for a device to measure this drug.
- Swish drug in mouth and then spit the drug out.
- Do not swallow this drug.
- Keep out of your eyes.

Lozenge:

- Suck oral lozenge. Do not chew, break, or crush it. Do not swallow it whole.

Oral spray:

- Some of these drugs need to be shaken before use. Be sure you know if this product needs to be shaken before using it.
- This drug may catch on fire. Do not use near an open flame or while smoking.

Oral-disintegrating tablet:

- Place on your tongue and let it dissolve. Water is not needed. Do not swallow it whole. Do not chew, break, or crush it.

Oral film:

- Be sure your hands are dry before you touch this drug.
- Let dissolve in your mouth. Water is not needed.

For rectal use:

- This drug is for rectal use only. Do not take this drug by mouth.
- Do not put this drug into the rectum by using your fingers or any type of applicator. Follow what the doctor has told you to do.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- If you use this drug on a regular basis, use a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not use 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.
- Many times this drug is used on an as needed basis. Do not use more often than told by the doctor.

How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

All products:

- Store at room temperature. Do not freeze.
- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

All skin products:

- Protect from heat or open flame.

Skin spray:

- Do not puncture or burn even if it seems empty.

All oral products:

- Protect from heat.

Oral suspension:

- It may be refrigerated to make it taste better.
- Throw away any part not used 2 weeks after this drug was mixed.

Oral spray:

- Protect from heat or open flame. Do not puncture or burn even if it seems empty.

General drug facts

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else's drugs.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of this information is governed by the Terms of Use, available at https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/clinical-effectiveness-terms.

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If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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