PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Pimecrolimus

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

Elidel [DSC]

## Brand Names: Canada

Elidel

## Warning

- Long-term safety of this drug is not known. Lymphoma, skin cancer, and other types of cancer have rarely happened in people treated with this drug. It is not known if this drug caused this effect. Do not use this drug without a break for a long time unless told to do so by the doctor. Use only on the affected skin. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- This drug is not approved for use in children younger than 2 years of age. Talk with the doctor.

## What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat eczema.
- It may be given to you for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

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

### For all patients taking this drug:

- 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 you have any of these health problems: Skin areas that have cancers or pre-cancers, a skin disease called Netherton's syndrome, other skin problems that may weaken the skin, a skin infection (including chicken pox or herpes), or a weak immune system.
- If you are taking any drugs that suppress your immune system. There are many drugs that can do this. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.

### Children:

- 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.

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?

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Avoid sun, sunlamps, and tanning beds. If you need to be outside after putting this drug on, wear clothing that protects the treated area from the sun. Talk with your doctor to see if you need to do anything else to protect

you from the sun.

- Do not have any kind of light therapy while you are using this drug.
- You may have more chance of getting an infection. Wash hands often. Stay away from people with infections, colds, or flu.
- Talk with your doctor before you use other drugs or products on your skin. This includes soaps.
- You may need to have your skin checked while you take this drug. Talk with your doctor.
- You may use moisturizer if this drug causes dry skin. Talk with your doctor or pharmacist about what kind of moisturizer to use.
- This drug may cause harm if swallowed. If this drug is swallowed, call a doctor or poison control center right away.
- 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.

## 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:

- 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 infection like fever, chills, very bad sore throat, ear or sinus pain, cough, more sputum or change in color of sputum, pain with passing urine, mouth sores, or wound that will not heal.
- Signs of skin infection like oozing, heat, swelling, redness, or pain.
- Warts.

- Cold sores.
- Skin ulcers.
- A skin lump or growth.
- Change in color or size of a mole.
- Call your doctor right away if you have a swollen gland, night sweats, shortness of breath, or weight loss without trying.

## 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:

- Headache.
- Signs of a common cold.
- Nose or throat irritation.
- Flu-like signs.
- It is common to have burning, stinging, soreness, or itching where this drug is put on. Most of the time, these happen during the first few days of treatment and go away as skin gets better. Call your doctor if any of these effects are very bad, bother you, or do not go away.

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.

- Do not take this drug by mouth. Use on your skin only. Keep out of your mouth, nose, and eyes (may burn).
- If you get this drug in any of these areas, rinse well with water.
- Wash your hands before and after use. If your hand is the treated area, do not wash your hand after use.
- Put on clean, dry skin.
- Put a thin layer on the affected skin and rub in gently.
- Do not use on open wounds or infected skin.
- Avoid putting on healthy skin.
- Do not use coverings (bandages, dressings) unless told to do so by the doctor.
- Do not bathe, shower, or swim right after putting on.
- Stop this drug when health problem is gone.
- Use this drug for short periods of time. If signs show up again, talk with the doctor.
- If your signs do not get better after 6 weeks of care, talk with your doctor.

## What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Put on 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 put on 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

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

- Store at room temperature. Do not freeze.
- Store in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- 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.

## 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.
- This drug comes with an extra patient fact sheet called a Medication Guide. Read it with care. Read it again each time this drug is refilled. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with the doctor, 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.

## Last Reviewed Date

2025-09-08

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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.

Pimecrolimus - Last updated on December 12, 2022
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