PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Clindamycin (Topical

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

Cleocin; Cleocin-T; Clindacin; Clindacin ETZ; Clindacin Pac [DSC]; Clindacin-P; Clindagel [DSC]; Clindesse; Evoclin [DSC]; Xaciato

Brand Names: Canada

Dalacin Vaginal [DSC]; TARO-Clindamycin

What is this drug used for?

All skin products:

- It is used to treat pimples (acne).
- It may be given to your child for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

All vaginal products:

- It is used to treat vaginal infections. If this drug has been given for some other reason, talk with the doctor for more information.

What do I need to tell the doctor BEFORE my child takes this drug?

- If your child is allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell the doctor about the allergy and what signs your child had.

- If your child has ever had any of these health problems: Crohn's disease, certain other stomach or bowel problems (colitis, enteritis), or severe bowel problems while taking an antibiotic (severe diarrhea, bowel swelling, stomach pain).
- If your child is using any products that have erythromycin.

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

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

What are some things I need to know or do while my child takes this drug?

All products:

- Tell all of your child's health care providers that your child is taking this drug. This includes your child's doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- This drug may cause harm if swallowed. If this drug is swallowed, call a doctor or poison control center right away.

If your child is pregnant or breast-feeding a baby:

- Talk with the doctor if your child is pregnant, becomes pregnant, or is breast-feeding a baby. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to your child and the baby.

All skin products:

- Do not use coverings (bandages, dressings, make-up) unless told to do so by the doctor.
- It may take several weeks to see the full effects.
- Talk with your child's doctor before you use other drugs or products on your

child's skin. This includes soaps.

- Some of these drugs may catch on fire. Do not use near an open flame or while smoking.
- If your child is breast-feeding a baby and uses this drug on the breast or nipple, have your child wash the area before breast-feeding the baby.

All vaginal products:

- Do not let your child douche or use other vaginal products like tampons while she is using this drug. Your child may need to avoid these things for some time after the last dose. If you have questions, talk with your child's doctor.
- Do not give to your child longer than you have been told. A second infection may happen.

If your child is or may be sexually active:

- Be sure your child does not have sex while using this drug. Your child may need to avoid sex for some time after the last dose. If you have questions, talk with your child's doctor.

Vaginal gel:

- Polyurethane condoms may not work to prevent pregnancy or stop the spread of diseases passed through sex while using this drug and for 7 days after stopping this drug. Your child will need to use latex or polyisoprene condoms during this time.

All other vaginal products :

- Condoms or diaphragms may not work to prevent pregnancy or stop the spread of diseases passed through sex while using this drug and for a period of time after your child stops this drug. Your child will need to use some other kind of birth control for some time after the last dose. Be sure you know how long your child will need to do this.

What are some side effects that I need to call my child's 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 child's doctor or get medical help right away if your child has 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.
- Diarrhea caused by a certain bowel infection (C diff) has happened with most antibiotics. C diff may happen during treatment or within a few months after the last dose. This infection can be severe or even deadly. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has stomach cramps, fever, long-lasting diarrhea, very loose or watery stools, or bloody stools. Check with your child's doctor before treating diarrhea.

All vaginal products:

- Signs of a urinary tract infection (UTI) like blood in the urine, burning or pain when passing urine, feeling the need to pass urine often or right away, fever, lower stomach pain, or pelvic pain.
- Vaginal itching or discharge.

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 child's doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother your child or do not go away:

All skin products:

- Irritation where this drug was used.
- Burning.
- Itching.
- Dry skin.
- Redness.
- Oily skin.

Foam:

- Headache.

All vaginal products:

- Irritation where this drug was used.
- Back pain.
- Constipation.
- Headache.

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

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

How is this drug best given?

Give this drug as ordered by your child's doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

All skin products:

- Do not give by mouth. Use on your child's skin only. Keep out of your child's mouth, nose, and eyes (may burn).

- Keep using this drug as you have been told by your child's doctor or other health care provider, even if your child's signs get better.
- Wash your hands before and after use.
- Clean affected part before use. Make sure to dry well.
- Put a thin layer on the affected part and rub in gently.
- Do not put on open sores or broken skin.

Lotion:

- Shake lotion well before use.

Swabs:

- If using pledgets (swabs), take pledget from the foil just before use. Use 1 time and throw away. More than 1 pledget may be used.

Foam:

- Put foam onto a cool surface or into a cap. Do not place foam in your hands.
- If the can seems warm or the foam seems runny, run cold water over the can.

All vaginal products:

- Do not give this drug by mouth. For vaginal use only. Keep out of your child's mouth, nose, and eyes (may burn).
- Keep using this drug as you have been told by your child's doctor or other health care provider, even if your child's signs get better.
- Wash your hands before and after use.

Vaginal cream:

- Some products are to be used at bedtime. For some products it does not matter. Check with the pharmacist about how to use this drug.

Vaginal gel:

- Do not use the applicators more than 1 time.

Suppository:

- Use at bedtime.
- To use suppository, take off foil wrapper.
- Do not use if the pouch that holds this drug is torn, open, or not sealed all the way.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

Vaginal gel:

- Only 1 dose of this drug is needed. If your child missed the dose, give it as soon as you think about it.

All other products:

- Give a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your child's next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your child's normal time.
- Do not give 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

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

All products:

- Store at room temperature. Do not freeze.
- Protect from heat.
- 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.

Foam:

- Protect from heat and sunlight. Do not puncture or burn even if it seems empty.

General drug facts

- If your child's symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your child's doctor.
- Do not share your child's drug with others and do not give anyone else's drug to your child.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your child's 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.

Last Reviewed Date

2026-02-16

Copyright

© 2026 UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates and/or licensors. All rights reserved.

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.

Clindamycin (Topical - Last updated on December 12, 2022
All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center