PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Tacrolimus (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: Canada

Protopic

**Warning**
**All products:**

- 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.

**Protopic ointment 0.03%:**

- This drug is not approved for use in children younger than 2 years of age. Talk with the doctor.

**Protopic ointment 0.1%:**

- This drug is not approved for use in children younger than 16 years of age. Talk with the doctor.

## What is this drug used for?

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

## 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 any of these health problems: Skin areas that have cancers or precancers, a skin disease called Netherton's syndrome, other skin problems that may weaken the skin, a skin infection like chickenpox or herpes, or a weak immune system.

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?

- 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.

- Do not have your child use longer than you have been told by your child's doctor.
- Have your child avoid lots of sun, sunlamps, and tanning beds. Use sunscreen and dress your child in clothing and eyewear that protects from the sun.
- Do not let your child have any kind of light therapy while using this drug.
- Alcohol may interact with this drug. Be sure your child does not drink alcohol.
- Talk with your child's doctor before you use other drugs or products on your child's skin. This includes soaps.
- Have your child's skin checked as you have been told by the doctor.
- 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 child's doctor if any of these effects are very bad, bother your child, or do not go away.
- 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.

## 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:

- 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 skin infection like oozing, heat, swelling, redness, or pain.
- Signs of kidney problems like unable to pass urine, change in how much urine is passed, blood in the urine, or a big weight gain.
- Fever.

- Ear pain.
- A skin lump or growth.
- Swollen gland.
- Muscle pain.

## 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:

- Skin tingling.
- Skin irritation.
- Not able to handle heat or cold.
- Headache.
- Cough.
- Stuffy nose.
- Flu-like signs.
- Pimples (acne).
- Hair bumps.
- Upset stomach.

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.

- Do not give by mouth. Use on your child's skin only. Keep out of your child's mouth, nose, and eyes (may burn).
- 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 healthy skin.
- Do not use coverings (bandages, dressings) unless told to do so by the doctor.
- Do not let your child bathe, shower, or swim right after using.
- Stop this drug when health problem is gone.
- To help with skin reactions, moisturize your child's skin as the doctor has told you.

- If your child's signs do not get better after 6 weeks of care, talk with your child's doctor.

## What do I do if my child misses a dose?

- Put on 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 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 in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- Keep lid tightly closed.
- 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 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

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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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