Clobetasone butyrate for inflammatory skin conditions (Clobavate, Eumovate)

You only need to use a small amount of this preparation. Apply it thinly just to the areas affected, and then massage it gently into the skin until it disappears.

It must not be applied more than twice a day, and once a day is often sufficient.

Topical corticosteroids should not be used for long periods of time or on large areas of the body, especially in children.

About clobetasone butyrate

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Type of medicine</th>
<th>A moderately potent topical corticosteroid</th>
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<tr>
<td>Used for</td>
<td>Inflammatory skin conditions such as eczema and dermatitis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Also called</td>
<td>Clobavate®, Eumovate®, Trimovate® (clobetasone butyrate in combination with oxytetracycline and nystatin)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Available as</td>
<td>Cream and ointment</td>
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Clobetasone butyrate is classed as a moderately potent topical corticosteroid. Topical corticosteroids are also referred to as topical steroids. Topical steroids are used in addition to moisturisers (emollients) for treating inflammatory skin conditions such as eczema and dermatitis. A topical steroid is used when patches of eczema or dermatitis flare up. Clobetasone butyrate relieves the symptoms of a flare-up by reducing inflammation, itching and redness. It is not a cure for the condition, but it will help to relieve the symptoms. Although less potent topical steroids are often preferred for use in children, a short course of clobetasone butyrate may be prescribed for a child with severe eczema on the arms or legs.

Short courses of clobetasone butyrate may also be prescribed for the treatment of psoriasis for areas such as the face, or the inside of elbows and behind the knees.

It is likely you will be prescribed a cream if the affected areas of your skin are moist or weeping, or an ointment if your skin is dry. Clobetasone butyrate is available on prescription. Small packs of clobetasone butyrate can also be bought at a pharmacy, without a prescription, under certain conditions.

There is a brand of clobetasone butyrate called Trimovate®. This cream contains two antibacterial agents in addition to the topical steroid. These are oxytetracycline and nystatin. You may be prescribed this for a short period if some areas of your skin have become infected. It is typically used twice a day for one week only.

Before using clobetasone butyrate

To make sure this is the right treatment for you, before you start using clobetasone butyrate it is important that your doctor or pharmacist knows:

- If you have any areas of infected skin.
- If you have rosacea or acne.
- If you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- If you have ever had an allergic reaction to a skin preparation.

How to use clobetasone butyrate

- Before you start using the preparation, read the manufacturer’s printed information leaflet from inside the pack. It will give you more information about topical steroids and will provide you with a full list of the side-effects that you may experience from using them.
- Apply a small amount to the areas of skin which are inflamed. Then gently rub it into the skin until it has disappeared. Unless you have been prescribed the brand called Trimovate®, do not use it on any areas of infected skin.
- Your doctor will tell you how often to apply the cream or ointment. It should not be applied more than twice a day, and once a day is often sufficient.
The amount of topical steroid that you should apply is commonly measured by fingertip units (FTUs). One FTU is the amount of cream or ointment that is squeezed out along an adult’s fingertip (that is, from the very end of the finger to the first crease in the finger). As a guide, one FTU is enough to cover an area twice the size of an adult hand. Your doctor will give you an idea of how many FTUs you will need to cover the area of your skin which is affected.

- If you are using more than one topical corticosteroid, make sure you know when and where to use each one. If you are unsure, check with your doctor or ask your pharmacist for further advice.
- After you have applied clobetasone butyrate, remember to wash your hands (unless your hands are the treated area).
- If you are using clobetasone butyrate for psoriasis, make sure you follow your doctor’s instructions carefully. It should not be used for large areas of psoriasis or for long periods of time, as these can cause your symptoms to flare up again afterwards.
- Children are susceptible to side-effects from topical steroids. The main concern is for children who need frequent courses, as it can have an effect on their growth and this may need to be monitored. If your child has been prescribed clobetasone butyrate, follow the directions you have been given very carefully, and do not use it for longer than you have been told to. As a general rule, it should not be used for more than 1-2 weeks in children. It is not suitable for children under 12 years of age unless it has been prescribed by a doctor.

Getting the most from your treatment

- If you are using a moisturiser along with this preparation, apply the moisturiser first. Then wait 10-15 minutes before applying clobetasone butyrate. This allows time for the moisturiser to be absorbed before the topical corticosteroid is applied. Your skin should be moist but not slippery when you apply clobetasone butyrate.
- If you have been told to use the cream/ointment on your face, be careful not to get any near your eyes and do not use it for longer periods of time than you have been advised.
- Unless advised to do so by your doctor, do not apply a bandage or dressing to the area being treated, as this will increase absorption of the steroid through your skin and increase the risk of side-effects.
- Your doctor will tell you how long to use the preparation for. The general rule is to continue to use the cream/ointment until the flare-up has gone and then to stop it. A course of treatment for 7-14 days is often sufficient. If your symptoms have not improved after this time (or if they get worse), speak again with your doctor for further advice. Some people with severe skin conditions may be advised to use it for up to four weeks between courses of more potent topical steroids. Clobetasone butyrate should not be used for long periods of time on large areas of the body, especially in children.
- After you finish using clobetasone butyrate, continue to use your moisturiser every day. This will help to prevent a further flare-up. Your doctor may also prescribe a less potent steroid cream for you to use when needed.

Can clobetasone butyrate cause problems?

Along with their useful effects, most medicines can cause unwanted side-effects but not everyone will experience them. Although side-effects from moderately potent corticosteroids like clobetasone butyrate are rare, you can reduce the risk further by applying the preparation thinly, no more than twice a day, and to the affected areas only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Side-effects of clobetasone butyrate</th>
<th>What can I do if I experience this?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A burning sensation, or smarting</td>
<td>These may occur in the first few days but usually get better after this.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thinning of the skin, permanent stretch marks, allergic contact dermatitis, acne, rosacea, and hair growth at the site of application</td>
<td>These would normally only affect you if you use clobetasone butyrate for long periods of time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The steroid may get through your skin and into your bloodstream</td>
<td>This usually causes no problem unless you use clobetasone butyrate regularly for long periods of time on large areas of your skin.</td>
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If you experience any other symptoms which you think may be due to the cream/ointment, speak with your doctor or pharmacist for further advice.

How to store clobetasone butyrate

- Keep all medicines out of the reach and sight of children.
- Store in a cool, dry place, away from direct heat and light.
Important information about all medicines

Make sure that the person supplying this medicine knows about any other medicines that you are taking or using. This includes medicines you buy and herbal and homeopathic medicines.

Before using this medicine tell your doctor if you have ever had an allergic reaction after taking or using any medicine.

Never use more than the prescribed dose. If you suspect that someone has swallowed some of the medicine by accident, contact the accident and emergency department of your local hospital for advice.

If you are having an operation or dental treatment, tell the person carrying out the treatment which medicines you are taking or using.

If you buy any medicines check with a pharmacist that they are safe to take with your other medicines.

This medicine is for you. Never give it to other people even if their condition appears to be the same as yours.

Do not keep out-of-date or unwanted medicines. Take them to your local pharmacy which will dispose of them for you.

If you have any questions about this medicine ask your pharmacist.

Further reading & references


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Author: Michael Stewart
Peer Reviewer: Sid Dajani

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