



# Aciclovir cream for herpes (cold sore)

This leaflet is for parents and carers about how to use this medicine in children. Our information sometimes differs from that provided by the manufacturers, because their information is usually aimed at adults. Please read this leaflet carefully. Keep it somewhere safe so that you can read it again

## Name of medicine

**Aciclovir 5% cream**

**Common brands:** Zovirax

## Why is it important for my child to take this medicine?

Herpes simplex virus causes an infection around the mouth that is commonly known as a 'cold sore'. Aciclovir slows the growth and spread of the virus so that your child's body can fight off the infection. It is known as an anti-viral medicine.

## What is aciclovir cream available as?

- **5% cream** comes in 2 g and 10 g tubes

## When should I give aciclovir cream?

Aciclovir cream is usually applied **five times** a day.

Try to space these times out as evenly as you can. Ideally, around four hours apart.

Apply the cream at about the same time(s) each day so that this becomes part of your child's daily routine, which will help you to remember.

You must continue using the cream for 3 days after the cold sore has gone.

## How much should I give?

Your doctor will work out the amount of aciclovir cream (the dose) that is right for *your* child. The dose will be shown on the medicine label.



**It is important that you follow your doctor's instructions about how much to give.**

## How should I give it?

- First, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and hot water.
- Squeeze a small (pea-size) amount of cream onto the tip of your finger.
- Spread the cream in a thin layer over the cold sore until it has soaked into the skin. Do not rub the cream/ointment hard into the skin as you may irritate the cold sore.
- Do not apply the cream to skin that is not affected.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and hot water after applying the cream.

## When should the medicine start working?

The medicine should start working straight away, and your child's cold sore will start to get better within a few days. Aciclovir works best if it is given as soon as the symptoms appear. The first sign is often a tingling feeling or pain.

It is important to carry on applying aciclovir cream for a few days after the cold sore has gone. Do not stop early, as the virus may start to multiply again and the cold sore may return.

## What if my child is sick (vomits)?

You do not need to worry if your child is sick, as the medicine will still work.

## What if I forget to give it?

Just give the next dose as soon as you remember but make sure there is at least 2 hours between each application.

## What if I give too much?

You are unlikely to do harm if you give an extra dose of aciclovir cream.

If your child accidentally swallows aciclovir cream, it is unlikely to do harm. However, if you are worried contact your doctor or local NHS services (details at end of leaflet).

Have the medicine or packaging with you if you telephone for advice.

## Are there any possible side-effects?

We use medicines to make our children better, but sometimes they have other effects that we don't want (side-effects).

Your child is unlikely to get side-effects with aciclovir cream. Any side-effects that do occur are usually mild and will wear off after a few days. If you are worried contact your doctor.

## Side-effects you must do something about



If your child is short of breath or is wheezing, or their face, lips or tongue start to swell, or they develop a rash, they may be allergic to aciclovir. Take your child to hospital or call an ambulance straight away.

## Other side-effects you need to know about

- Your child may have a stinging or burning feeling where the cream has been applied.
- Your child's skin may become red, or may feel itchy or dry. Using a moisturising cream may help.

There may, sometimes, be other side-effects that are not listed above. If you notice anything unusual and are concerned, contact your doctor. You can report any suspected side-effects to a UK safety scheme at [www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard](http://www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard)

### Can other medicines be given at the same time?

- You can give your child medicines that contain paracetamol, unless your doctor has told you not to.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist **before** giving any other medicines to your child. This includes herbal or complementary medicines.

### Is there anything else I need to know about this medicine?

- Keep the aciclovir cream away from your child's eyes. If your child accidentally gets aciclovir cream in their eye, wash it out with warm water and contact your doctor if you are worried.
- It is important that your child completes the course of aciclovir. This means that you must use the cream for the number of days that the doctor has told you to. Your child's cold sore will probably heal in a few days, but it takes a few more days for aciclovir to completely treat the infection. If you stop giving it too soon, the virus may start to multiply again and the cold sore may come back.
- Aciclovir will not kill all the herpes viruses and some will remain in your child's body. If symptoms of a cold sore return at any time, which usually starts with a tingling or painful feeling on the skin around the mouth area, get a new prescription of aciclovir cream from your doctor.

### General advice about medicines

- Try to give medicines at about the same times each day, to help you remember.
- If you are not sure a medicine is working, contact your doctor but continue to give the medicine as usual in the meantime. Do not give extra doses as you may do harm.
- Only give this medicine to your child. Never give it to anyone else, even if their condition appears to be the same, as this could do harm.
- Make sure that the medicine you have at home has not reached the 'use by' date on the packaging. Give old medicines to your pharmacist to dispose of.

### Where I should keep this medicine?

- Keep the medicine in a cupboard, away from heat and direct sunlight. It does not need to be kept in the fridge.
- Make sure that children cannot see or reach the medicine.
- Keep the medicine in the container it came in.

### Who to contact for more information

Your child's doctor, pharmacist or nurse will be able to give you more information about aciclovir cream and about other medicines used to treat herpes simplex infection.

You can also get useful information from:

#### England: NHS 111

Tel 111

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

#### Scotland: NHS 24

Tel 111

[www.nhs24.scot](http://www.nhs24.scot)

#### Wales: NHS 111 Wales

Tel 111

[www.111.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.111.wales.nhs.uk)

#### Northern Ireland: NI Direct

[www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk)

[www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk](http://www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk)