

# Gentamicin and hydrocortisone ear drops for inflammatory ear infections

This leaflet is about the use of gentamicin and hydrocortisone ear drops to treat inflammatory infections of the outer ear that are caused by bacteria (sometimes called bacterial otitis externa). It is not suitable for ear infections caused by viruses.



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 drug

Gentamicin and hydrocortisone

Brand name: Gentisone HC ear drops

## Why is it important to take this medicine?

Gentamicin and hydrocortisone ear drops are used to treat your child's ear pain and infection. Gentamicin is an antibiotic; by giving the ear drops regularly in the way that your doctor has told you to, it should kill the harmful bacteria and get rid of your child's infection. The hydrocortisone is a mild steroid and will relieve your child's inflammation, pain and itching.

## What are gentamicin and hydrocortisone ear drops available as?

- **Gentamicin (0.3%) and hydrocortisone (1%) ear drops** (supplied in a 10 mL dropper bottle)

## When should I give gentamicin and hydrocortisone ear drops?

Gentamicin and hydrocortisone ear drops are usually given **three or four times** each day. Your doctor will tell you how often to give the drops to your child.

- **Three times a day:** give the drops once in the morning, once in the early afternoon and once in the evening. Ideally these times are at least 6 hours apart, for example 8 am, 2 pm and 8 pm.
- **Four times a day:** this should be first thing in the morning, at about midday, late in the afternoon and at bedtime. Ideally, these times should be at least 4 hours apart, for example 8 am, midday, 4 pm and 8 pm.

Give the ear drops at about the same times each day.

## How much should I give?

Your doctor will work out the number of ear drops (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 the ear drops?

- Use the ear drops only in the affected ear, unless your doctor has told you to treat both ears.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and hot water.
- You may need help from another adult to give ear drops to your child. One of you can hold the child still and one can give the drops. You may find it helpful to wrap a small child or baby in a blanket to help keep them still.
- Shake the bottle and remove the cap.
- Your child needs to have their head tilted to one side. (They could rest their head on a pillow.)




- Put the tip of the dropper just inside the ear hole. Try to avoid touching the nozzle on to the ear. Gently squeeze the drop(s) into the ear.
- Your child should keep their head tilted to one side for a minute or so.
- Wipe the nozzle with a clean tissue after each use.
- If you think the drops didn't go into the ear, you can repeat the process but do not try more than twice.
- Try to avoid the tip of the bottle touching any part of your child's ear if possible.
- Wash your hands again with soap and hot water.
- Repeat the above steps for the other ear if necessary.

## When should the medicine start working?

The ear drops should start working straight away, but it may take 2–3 days before your child starts to feel better. It is important that you give the whole course of ear drops in the way that your doctor has told you to, so that they kill the bacteria and get rid of the infection. **Do not stop early.**

## Important things to know about taking antibiotics

- It is important that your child **completes the course** of antibiotic. This means that they must take the medicine for the number of days that the doctor has told you to, or until all of the medicine has been taken. If you stop giving the antibiotic too soon, the bacteria that are left will start to multiply again, and may cause another infection. There is also a risk that these bacteria will be 'resistant' to the first antibiotic. This means that it might not work next time, and your child might need a different antibiotic, which might not work as well or cause more side-effects.
- Children are sometimes sick (vomit) or get diarrhoea when taking antibiotics. Encourage them to drink water to replace the fluid they have lost.
- **Do not** give your child any medicine to stop the diarrhoea unless your doctor has told you to.

- Try to give the medicine at about the same times each day, to help you remember, and to make sure that there is the right amount of medicine in your child's body to kill the bacteria.
  - Only give this medicine to your child for their current infection.
  - **Never save** medicine for future illnesses. Give old or unused antibiotics to your pharmacist to dispose of.
  - Only give the antibiotic to the child for whom it was prescribed. Never give it to anyone else, even if their condition appears to be the same, as this could do harm.
-  If you think someone else may have taken the medicine by accident, contact your doctor for advice.
- Antibiotics only kill bacteria; they do not kill viruses. This means that they do not work against colds, sore throats, flu or other infections that are caused by viruses. Your doctor will not prescribe antibiotics for these illnesses.

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

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

## What if I forget to give it?

Do not give the missed dose. Just give the next dose as usual.

## What if I give too much?

You are unlikely to do harm if you give your child extra ear drops by mistake. If you are concerned that you may have given too much, 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 may develop a rash or itching in the ear(s) while using the drops. This will stop when the course of treatment is finished. If it is a problem, contact your doctor for advice.

There may, sometimes, be other side-effects. If you notice anything unusual and are concerned, contact your doctor.

## Can other medicines be given at the same time as gentamicin and hydrocortisone ear drops?

- You can give your child medicines that contain paracetamol or ibuprofen, 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. However, most medicines

can be given safely while using gentamicin and hydrocortisone ear drops.

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

- Do not put cotton wool (or anything else) into the ears during the course of treatment.
- Once opened, gentamicin and hydrocortisone ear drops should not be kept for longer than 4 weeks.

## Where should I 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 doctor, pharmacist or nurse will be able to give you more information about gentamicin and hydrocortisone ear drops and about other medicines used to treat ear infections.

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 Direct** - 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)