

Diltiazem hydrochloride 2% cream

This leaflet aims to answer your questions about using diltiazem hydrochloride 2% cream to treat your anal fissure.

Please read this leaflet carefully before you start using the cream. Keep the leaflet in a safe place as you may need to refer to it again. This information is not intended to replace your doctor's advice. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you. This leaflet should be read in conjunction with any additional information from the manufacturer that is supplied with the medicine.

What is it used for?

Diltiazem hydrochloride 2% cream is used to promote the healing and reduce symptoms of an anal fissure. An anal fissure is a tear in the skin of the lower half of the anal canal (back passage). Symptoms can include severe and sharp pain, irritation and tenderness. Certain fissures may heal quite quickly, whereas others can take several months to heal.

Diltiazem hydrochloride works by relaxing the muscle around the anus (the anal sphincter). This reduces pressure and increases blood flow to the area to allow healing to occur.

Taking an unlicensed medicine

Diltiazem is licensed in the UK for the treatment of angina and hypertension, and is available as tablets and capsules to be taken orally (by mouth). It is not licensed for the treatment of anal fissure and diltiazem cream is made up as a 'special' medicine, so it is called an 'unlicensed' medicine. The leaflet, **Unlicensed medicines – a guide for patients**, has more information about unlicensed medicines. If you would like a copy, please ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. Alternatively, you can call the pharmacy medicines helpline – contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

Before starting treatment

Please consider:

- Are you allergic to diltiazem or any other ingredients in this preparation (see list at the end of the leaflet)?
- Are you pregnant or breastfeeding?
- Do you have any heart problems?
- Are you taking any medicines to reduce blood pressure?
- Are you taking other medicines containing diltiazem, for example to treat high blood pressure or other heart conditions?

If the answer to any of these questions is YES, please tell your doctor or pharmacist before using diltiazem 2% cream.

How do I use the cream?

- Wash your hands before and after you use the cream to ensure hygiene is maintained.
- Apply about 2-2.5cm (1 inch) of the cream to your finger.
- Apply the cream just inside and around the anus (back passage) as instructed by your doctor. A finger covering such as cling film, disposable glove or finger cot may be used to apply the cream (you can get finger cots from a local pharmacy or surgical supplies retailer).
- Use the cream twice daily (morning and evening) or as directed by your doctor.
- Try to ensure you have opened your bowels before using the cream. This is so that the cream can be in contact with the rectal tissue for as long as possible.

Please note: This product is for external use only. DO NOT take it by mouth.

How long should I use the cream for?

Your doctor will let you know how long you should continue treatment for. In most cases this will be for six to eight weeks. If your symptoms have not resolved during this time, you may need to go back to your doctor for a further review.

Are there any side effects?

All medicines have potential side effects which may or may not occur in people who take them. The most common side effects reported by people who use diltiazem hydrochloride cream (which occur in less than one out of every 10 people) are:

- headaches – these will usually be mild and can be treated with simple painkillers (such as paracetamol). If the headache does not resolve or is unpleasant, please consult your pharmacist or doctor.
- light-headedness or dizziness, especially when getting up from a sitting or lying down position. If you begin to feel dizzy, sit or lie down until the feeling passes.
- local itching, soreness or rectal bleeding.

Speak to your doctor or pharmacist if any of the above side effects continue or become troublesome, or if you experience any other symptoms which you think may be due to this medicine.

How to store the cream

- Store the cream in a refrigerator (between 2-8°C), away from direct heat and light.
- Do not use the cream after four weeks of opening or after the expiry date on the tube, whichever comes first. Return any unused cream to your local pharmacy who will dispose of it safely.
- Keep all medicines out of the sight and reach of children.
- Do not share your medicine with anyone else, even if their symptoms appear similar to yours.

Will I need further supplies?

Treatment with diltiazem 2% cream usually continues for six to eight weeks. As the cream has an expiry of four weeks once it has been opened, the hospital will supply you with two tubes to allow you to complete the course. If your symptoms have not resolved after the course is complete, you should go back to your GP for a review, unless you have a follow-up hospital appointment already booked.

Other information

As well as the active ingredient diltiazem hydrochloride, this cream also contains cetostearyl alcohol, Ceatereth-20, white soft paraffin, liquid paraffin EP, phenoxyethanol and purified water.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about diltiazem 2% cream, please speak to your doctor or pharmacist, or contact our **Pharmacy Medicines Helpline** on 020 7188 8748 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and Accessible Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

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