Betamethasone (Betnovate®) in Orabase® for inflammation in the mouth

This leaflet gives you more information about betamethasone (Betnovate®) in Orabase® and how it is used in the mouth. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is betamethasone (Betnovate®) in Orabase®?
Betamethasone belongs to a group of medicines called corticosteroids (steroids). Steroids work by reducing inflammation, swelling and irritation. Betamethasone ointment may help reduce pain in your mouth, and speed up the healing process. Betamethasone is sometimes referred to by its old brand name Betnovate®. Orabase® is a paste which sticks to the mouth.

What is betamethasone in Orabase® used for?
Betamethasone in Orabase® can be used for the treatment of mouth conditions that cause soreness such as oral lichen planus, blistering conditions and severe ulceration from other causes. It is commonly prescribed in the UK and Ireland. Betamethasone ointment is a licensed medicine, however mixing it with Orabase® paste, and using it in the mouth is not a licensed use. The treatment is safe, and has been chosen because we know that applying steroids directly to the mouth works to reduce oral inflammation, and there are no licensed steroid products for use in the mouth. This way of using steroids in the mouth is particularly effective as the Orabase® helps the betamethasone stick to areas of the mouth better.

Taking 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.

How do I use betamethasone in Orabase®?
Your prescription will be for betamethasone ointment and Orabase® paste as two separate products which you will need to mix before each dose is used. To prepare each dose, put a pea-sized amount of betamethasone in a small medicine cup, and add the same amount of Orabase® paste. Mix the ointment and paste with a cotton bud, and use the cotton bud to apply it to the affected area in the mouth using just enough to coat the affected area. The paste sticks better if the mouth is as dry as possible.
If you feel you will have difficulty preparing the betamethasone in Orabase® it can be prescribed as a pre-mixed preparation. The pharmacy will need to make this up for you and it will not be ready immediately. It also has a short expiry and will only be available through the hospital pharmacies.

**How often and at what time of the day should I use betamethasone in Orabase®?**

1. Use once or twice a day as directed by your doctor, ideally after mealtimes or after you have brushed your teeth, last thing at night.
2. Do not rinse the mouth after use, and avoid eating or drinking for at least one hour after applying. The best time to use the paste is often overnight. If any paste is still present in the morning, it should be rinsed away.

**What should I do if I forget to take the medicine?**

If you forget to use betamethasone in Orabase® and the next dose is nearly due, you should wait for the next dose. If you have only forgotten for a few hours, use the treatment, and then use the next dose at the usual time.

**Are there any side effects?**

When used correctly this medicine rarely causes side effects. However, as with all medicines, some patients experience side effects. Burning or stinging is possible in the first few days of treatment. This usually clears up. Some people develop thrush in their mouth and find that their mouth becomes sore. If this happens, a course of antifungal treatment will clear the thrush. Your GP will be able to prescribe this for you.

**Is there anything else I need to know?**

Please store the betamethasone and Orabase® (whether it is premixed or in two separate tubes) in the fridge and keep away from young children.

**How do I get a repeat prescription?**

If you have been prescribed betamethasone and Orabase® as separate tubes, your first prescription will come from the Oral Medicines Clinic and can be taken to the outpatient pharmacy at the hospital (Lloyds). When you run out of the medications your GP will be able to prescribe more if the treatment is still needed.

If you have been prescribed betamethasone in Orabase® in a premixed tub, this preparation is made up in Guy’s pharmacy and is not available in other pharmacies. Please note it will not be immediately available and will have a short expiry date. If further supplies are available on your prescription, you can contact the Pharmacy Outpatient Department, t: 020 7188 7611, to obtain them. Repeat prescriptions can be ordered by contacting the Oral Medicines Clinic, t: 020 7188 4395.

**Useful sources of information**

The British Society of Oral Medicine have several patient information leaflets for conditions in oral medicine, w: www.bsom.org.uk/clinical-care/patient-information/
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, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm

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  
**w:** 111.nhs.uk

NHS website
Online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you take control of your health and wellbeing.

**w:** www.nhs.uk

Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust
Members of Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, please get in touch.

**t:** 0800 731 0319  
**e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk  
**w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership

Was this leaflet useful?
We want to make sure the information you receive is helpful to you. If you have any comments about this leaflet, we would be happy to hear from you, fill in our simple online

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