

How to get your psoriatic patients off the hook : Dithrocream: in three strengths.

Contributors

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**HOW TO GET YOUR
PSORIATIC PATIENTS
OFF THE HOOK**

THE RISKS OF STEROID DEPENDENCE

IN THE PAST, topical steroids have been considered to be the most practical psoriasis treatment for use in general practice. However, in recent years there have been an increasing number of reports expressing concern about their widespread use. They have a generalised suppressive action¹ and may merely mask the underlying problem. Psoriasis which might appear to have been cleared by using steroids, often flares up again soon after treatment is withdrawn², and the rebound may be even more severe than the original condition. Patients are tempted to resume applications in order to obtain relief and so begins the vicious circle, which may lead ultimately to pathological dependence.

The side-effects associated with prolonged use of topical steroids are well documented and may involve striae³, telangiectasia⁴, skin thinning⁵ and even adrenal suppression⁶.

HOW TO GET YOUR PSORIATICS OFF THE HOOK

DITHROCREAM has been specially formulated for use in general practice and is based on a therapeutic agent which has already been in use in hospitals for over half a century. Apart from being cosmetically acceptable and easy to use⁷, it is extremely effective and does not lead to dependence. By reducing the rate of psoriatic cell proliferation, it clears the condition and greatly improves the prospects of long-term remission.

Dithrocream is recommended as a first line treatment for patients suffering from sub-acute or chronic psoriasis, including psoriasis of the scalp.

In some instances, when topical steroids are withdrawn, a rebound eruption may occur², and in this case soft paraffin or emulsifying ointment should be applied to the psoriatic areas for approximately two weeks, or until the condition has stabilised. Treatment with Dithrocream 0.1% can then be commenced, starting on the thicker lesions⁸.



DITHROCREAM: IN THREE STRENGTHS

DITHROCREAM is available in three strengths, 0.1%, 0.25% and 0.5% (Forte). It has been found that patients



respond differently according to their skin type and it is recommended that the 0.1% strength be used initially to test the patient's reaction and response, and then increased to the 0.25% if necessary. Dithrocream 0.5% (Forte) should only be used under medical supervision by patients who have failed to respond to lower strengths of dithranol.

PRESENTATION

Dithrocream 0.1%

Pale yellow oil-in-water cream containing 0.1% Dithranol B.P.

Dithrocream 0.25%

Pale yellow oil-in-water cream containing 0.25% Dithranol B.P.

Dithrocream Forte

Pale yellow oil-in-water cream containing 0.5% Dithranol B.P.

USES

For the topical treatment of sub-acute and chronic psoriasis including psoriasis of the scalp. Dithrocream Forte should only be used for those patients who have failed to respond to lower strengths of dithranol.

DIRECTIONS

Dithrocream should be applied sparingly to the psoriatic lesions, preferably at night, and rubbed gently and carefully into the skin until absorbed. It is most important to avoid applying an excessive quantity which may cause unnecessary soiling and staining of the clothing and/or bed-linen. In the morning a bath should be taken to remove any surplus cream, which will have become red/brown in colour. The margins of the lesion will gradually become stained purple/brown as treatment progresses, but this will disappear after cessation of treatment.

For use on the scalp, shampoo to remove scalar debris and any previous application. Dry the hair and, after suitably parting, rub the cream well into the lesions. Treatment should be continued until the skin is entirely clear, i.e. when there is nothing to feel with the fingers and the texture is normal.

CONTRA-INDICATIONS, WARNINGS, ETC.

A small proportion of patients are sensitive to any form of dithranol treatment. If the initial treatment produces excessive soreness or if the lesions spread (particularly when potent topical steroids have recently been used), reduce frequency of applications and in extreme cases stop treatment.

Not to be used for acute psoriasis.

Keep away from the eyes and always wash hands after use.

PHARMACEUTICAL PRECAUTIONS

Do not expose to excessive heat.

LEGAL CATEGORY

Pharmacy only sale.

PACKAGE QUANTITIES

All strengths of Dithrocream are supplied in collapsible tubes containing 50 grams.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Dithrocream has been developed as a cream formulation of dithranol and is particularly convenient for home treatment. It is especially suitable for the exposed surfaces and hairy regions of the body including psoriasis of the scalp. Dithrocream Forte should only be used under close and constant medical supervision by patients who have failed to respond to lower strengths of dithranol.

PRODUCT LICENCE NUMBERS

Dithrocream 0.1% 0173/0029; 278/1/1

Dithrocream 0.25% 0173/0028; 278/1/2

Dithrocream Forte (0.5%) 0173/0027; 278/1/3

REFERENCES

1. Update, 1978, **17**, 11.
2. Practitioner, 1980, **224**, 471.
3. Archives of Dermatology, 1963, **87**, 450.
4. Prescribers Journal, 1974, **14**, 1.
5. British Journal of Dermatology, 1976, **94**, Supplement 12, 111.
6. Lancet, 1969, **1**, 485.
7. British Journal of Dermatology, 1979, **100**, 475.
8. Update, 1981, **23**, 259.

Dithrocream is a registered trade mark.

Further information is available from: Dermal Laboratories Limited, Gosmore, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG4 7QR.

Agents in Eire: Cahill May Roberts Limited, PO Box 1090, Chapelizod, Dublin 20.

DITHROCREAM®

DITHRANOL BP

