

Benzoyl peroxide

What is benzoyl peroxide topical?

Benzoyl peroxide has an antibacterial effect. It also has a mild drying effect, which allows excess oils and dirt to be easily washed away from the skin.

Benzoyl peroxide topical (for the skin) is used to treat [acne](#).

Benzoyl peroxide topical may also be used for purposes not listed in this medication guide.

Warnings

Benzoyl peroxide can cause a rare but serious allergic reaction or severe skin irritation. Stop using benzoyl peroxide topical and get emergency medical help if you have: [hives](#), itching; difficult breathing, feeling light-headed; or swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Before taking this medicine

You should not use benzoyl peroxide if you are allergic to it, or if you have:

- very sensitive skin.

Ask a doctor or pharmacist if this medicine is safe to use if you have any skin conditions or [allergies](#).

Ask a doctor before using this medicine if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Do not use this medicine on a child without medical advice.

How should I use benzoyl peroxide topical?

Benzoyl peroxide topical can cause a rare but serious allergic reaction or severe skin irritation. Before you start using benzoyl peroxide topical, you may choose to apply a "test dose" to see if you have a reaction. Apply a very small amount of the medicine to 1 or 2 small acne areas every day for 3 days in a row. If there is no reaction, begin using the full prescribed amount on the 4th day.

Use exactly as directed on the label, or as prescribed by your doctor.

Do not take by mouth. Topical medicine is for use only on the skin. Do not use on open wounds or on sunburned, windburned, dry, or irritated skin. Also avoid using benzoyl peroxide topical on wounds or on areas of [eczema](#). Wait until these conditions have healed before using this medication.

Wash your hands before and after applying this medication.

Clean and pat dry the skin to be treated. Apply benzoyl peroxide in a thin layer and rub in gently.

Read and carefully follow any Instructions for Use provided with your medicine. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you do not understand these instructions.

You may need to shake the medicine just before each use.

Do not cover the treated skin area unless your doctor has told you to.

Benzoyl peroxide may bleach hair or fabrics. Avoid allowing this medication to come into contact with your hair or clothing.

It may take several weeks before your symptoms improve. Keep using the medication as directed and tell your doctor if your symptoms do not improve.

Store at room temperature away from moisture and heat.

What happens if I miss a dose?

Apply the medicine as soon as you can, but skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next dose. Do not apply two doses at one time.

What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222.

What should I avoid while using benzoyl peroxide topical?

Rinse with water if benzoyl peroxide topical gets in your eyes or mouth.

Avoid using skin products that can cause irritation, such as harsh soaps, shampoos, hair coloring or permanent chemicals, hair removers or waxes, or skin products with alcohol, spices, astringents, or lime.

Avoid exposure to sunlight or tanning beds. Wear protective clothing and use sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher) when you are outdoors.

Benzoyl peroxide topical side effects

Benzoyl peroxide topical can cause a rare but serious allergic reaction or severe skin irritation. These reactions may occur just a few minutes after you apply the medicine, or within a day or longer afterward.

Stop using this medicine and get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction**: hives, itching; difficult breathing, feeling light-headed; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Stop using benzoyl peroxide and call your doctor at once if you have any of these side effects on the treated skin:

- severe itching or burning;
- severe stinging or redness;
- swelling; or
- peeling.

Common side effects may include:

- mild stinging or burning;
- itching or tingly feeling;
- skin dryness, peeling, or flaking; or
- redness or other irritation.

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

Benzoyl peroxide topical dosing information

Usual Adult Dose for Acne:

Gel/cream/liquid/lotion/bar/foam: Start with 1 application per day, then gradually increase to 2 or 3 times per day if needed or as directed by a healthcare provider

Cloth: Wash affected areas once or twice per day, or as directed by a healthcare provider

Comments:

- Clean the skin thoroughly before applying this drug.
- If dryness or peeling occurs, reduce application to once a day or every other day.
- If going outside, apply sunscreen after using this product.
- If irritation or sensitivity develops, discontinue use and ask a healthcare provider.

Use: Treatment of [acne vulgaris](#)

Usual Pediatric Dose for Acne:

12 years or older:

Foam: Start with 1 application per day, then gradually increase to 2 or 3 times per day if needed or as directed by a healthcare provider

Comments:

- Clean the skin thoroughly before applying this drug.
- If dryness or peeling occurs, reduce application to once a day or every other day.
- If going outside, apply sunscreen after using this product.
- If irritation or sensitivity develops, discontinue use and ask a healthcare provider.

Use: Treatment of acne vulgaris

What other drugs will affect benzoyl peroxide topical?

Applying benzoyl peroxide while you are also using [tretinoin](#) topical medicine may cause severe skin irritation. Brands that contain [tretinoin](#) include [Avita](#), [Renova](#), [Retin-A](#), Tretin-X, and others.

Medicine used on the skin is not likely to be affected by other drugs you use. But many drugs can interact with each other. Tell each of your health care providers about all medicines you use, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, [vitamins](#), and [herbal products](#).