

Quick Guide to Topical Steroid Use

MD Information

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The following table is intended to provide physicians with a few common topical steroids that are used for a variety of dermatologic conditions, based on body location. These steroids can be used safely for 2 weeks without significant risk of cutaneous or systemic side effects.

Of note:

- Ointments: oil-based and preservative free, provide an occlusive barrier which prevents moisture loss, allowing the greatest benefit, especially well-suited to dry, cracked skin
- Creams: non-greasy, disappear when rubbed in, more cosmetically appealing than ointments, often preferred by patients for use on face or under clothes, often contain preservatives and alcohol which may burn cracked skin
- Lotions: similar to creams, but less thick, quick absorption

	Potency	Examples	Available in
Face / Genitals / Skin folds	Low	Hydrocortisone 1% cr/oint Desonide 0.05% cream/ointment (<i>Desocort</i>)	15g, 450g 15g, 60g
Apply to affected area BID			
Body	Low	Hydrocortisone 1% cream/ointment Desonide 0.05% cr/oint (<i>Desocort</i>)	15g, 450g 15g, 60g
Apply to affected area BID	Mid	Mometasone 0.1% cream/ointment (<i>Elocom</i>)* Triamcinolone 0.1% cream/ointment (<i>Aristocort-R</i>) Betamethasone valerate 0.1% cream/oointment (<i>Betaderm</i>)	15g, 50g 15g, 30g, 500g 15g, 454g
Scalp	Low	Hydrocortisone 1% lotion (Emocort) Fluocinolone 0.01% oil (<i>Derma-Smooth/FS scalp oil</i>)	60ml 118ml, 120ml, 355ml
Apply to scalp QHS	Mid	Mometasone 0.1% lotion (<i>Elocom</i>)* Betamethasone 0.1% lotion (<i>Betaderm</i>)	35ml, 75ml 75ml
Diaper area	Low	Hydrocortisone 1% cr with clotrimazole 1% Desonide 0.05% cr (<i>Desocort</i>) with clotrimazole 1%	Any size format, compounded by pharmacy **
Apply to affected area BID		Note: clotrimazole prevents candida infections which are common in genital/diaper area	

* Mometasone 0.1% cream/ointment (*Elocom*) should only be applied once per day

** Patients without private insurance can be taught how to mix clotrimazole cream with steroid cream:

- Mix equal volumes of hydrocortisone 1% and clotrimazole 1%; or
- Mix equal volumes of desonide 0.05% and clotrimazole 1%

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Disclaimer:

The recommendations provided in this document are based on up-to-date evidence and expert opinions. However, the educational material contained herein is NOT a substitute for clinical judgment that is required to meet the different needs of individual patients. For more information, please consult a physician.