

Hydroquinone

What is this medicine used for?

- Lightens dark patches on the skin. [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#) [\[4\]](#)

Possible reasons not to use this medicine:

- If you have had an allergic reaction to hydroquinone or sulfites. [\[1\]](#)

How does it work?

- Hydroquinone suppresses metabolic processes of melanocytes, thus producing reversible depigmentation of the skin [\[2\]](#) [\[5\]](#)

What are the possible side effects of this medicine?

- Mild redness, stinging, or inflammation [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#) [\[4\]](#)

When should I contact my doctor? (serious side effects)

- If you experience an allergic reaction: Itching or hives, swelling in your face or hands, swelling or tingling in your mouth or throat, chest tightness, trouble breathing [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#)
- Intense itching, blistering, swelling, or blue-black darkening of your skin [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#) [\[5\]](#)
- Speckled discoloration of pigmentation across the face (rare) [\[1\]](#)

How do I use this medication?

- Use this medicine only on your skin. Rinse it off right away if it gets on a cut or scrape. Avoid getting the medication in your eyes, nose, or mouth. [\[6\]](#)
- Wash your hands with soap and water before and after you use this medicine. [\[6\]](#)
- Apply a thin layer of the medicine to the affected area. Rub it in gently. [\[6\]](#)
- Avoid getting medication on clothing as it may have a bleaching effect [\[8\]](#)
- Apply to general area of discoloration. Spot treatment is generally not suggested unless recommended by your doctor. [\[7\]](#)

- Cover the treated skin with sunscreen or clothing. [8]
- This medication can make you more sensitive to sunlight and excessive sun exposure should be avoided [1]

How should I store this medicine?

- This medication can be stored at room temperature (unless otherwise specified on the bottle), but it is best to store this medication in the refrigerator to prevent drug degradation which can lessen its effect. [3] [9]
- If the medication turns brown, discard the medication. [3] [9]

If you notice other side effects that you think are caused by this medicine, tell your doctor. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

References:

- [1] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK539693/#article-35898.s2>
- [2] <https://www.aocd.org/page/Hydroquinone>
- [3] <https://inchem.org/documents/hsg/hsg/hsg101.htm#:~:text=4.3%20Storage%20Hydroquinone%20should%20be,should%20be%20labelled%20as%20corrosive.>
- [4] <https://www.drugs.com/pro/hydroquinone-cream.html>
- [5] <https://www.medicinesinpregnancy.org/bumps/monographs/EXPOSURE-TO-HYDROQUINONE-IN-PREGNANCY/>
- [6] https://www.rxlist.com/consumer_hydroquinone_melquin_3/drugs-condition.htm
- [7] <https://www.aad.org/public/everyday-care/skin-care-secrets/routine/fade-dark-spots>
- [8] <https://www.goodrx.com/hydroquinone/what-is>
- [9] <https://www.aocd.org/page/Hydroquinone>