

## **IMPORTANT MEDICINE SAFETY INFORMATION**

### **TOPICAL CORTICOSTEROIDS - RISK OF WITHDRAWAL REACTIONS**

27 July 2022

**Dear Healthcare Professional,**

The following holders of certificates of registration (HCRs), Aspen Pharmacare, GlaxoSmithKline (Pty) Ltd and Glenmark Pharmaceuticals South Africa (Pty) Ltd, in collaboration with the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA), wish to draw your attention to the following important safety information associated with topical corticosteroid containing medicines registered in South Africa. This safety issue was based on a review of the available evidence conducted by the United Kingdom's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

#### ***Summary***

- Rare and severe adverse effects can occur on stopping treatment with topical corticosteroids, particularly after long-term continuous or inappropriate use of moderate-to-high potency products.
- There are two distinct clinical presentations of topical corticosteroid withdrawal: red burning skin or papulopustular rashes (the latter include steroid rosacea and perioral/periorificial dermatitis).

#### ***Advice to healthcare professionals***

- Long-term continuous or inappropriate use of topical corticosteroids, particularly those of moderate to high potency, can result in the development of rebound flares after stopping treatment. There are reports of flares manifesting as dermatitis with intense redness, stinging, and burning that can spread beyond the initial treatment area.
- When prescribing a topical corticosteroid, consider the lowest potency needed and restrict use to the shortest duration that is effective.
- Advise patients on the amount of product to be applied, as underuse can prolong treatment duration.
- Inform patients how long they should use a topical corticosteroid, especially on sensitive areas such as the face and genitals.
- Inform patients to return for medical advice if their skin condition worsens while using topical corticosteroids.
- Advise patients as to when it would be appropriate to re-treat without a consultation, and when to seek medical advice.
- For patients currently on long-term topical corticosteroid treatment, consider reducing potency or frequency of application (or both).

#### ***Advice for patients, parents and carers:***

- Topical corticosteroids are used on the skin to reduce inflammation.
- When used correctly, they are safe and effective treatments for a variety of skin disorders.
- Always apply topical corticosteroids as instructed and consult the Patient Information Leaflet provided with your medicine.
- Seek medical advice before using a topical corticosteroid on a new body area as some areas of the body are more prone to side effects.
- Very infrequent cases of severe skin reactions have been reported in long-term users of topical corticosteroids after they stop using them.
- If your skin worsens within 2 weeks of stopping a topical corticosteroid, do not start treatment again without consulting your doctor, unless previously advised to do so.

- As well as the known side effects associated with using too much of a topical corticosteroid or with using it for too long, remember that using too little can prolong treatment time and increase the risk of side effects.
- Ask your prescriber or pharmacist if you have any questions about your medicines or are concerned about side effects.

The Professional Information (PI) and Patient Information Leaflet (PIL) will be updated accordingly

Healthcare professionals are urged to report any adverse drug reactions (ADRs) or product quality issues to SAHPRA via the e-Reporting link available on the SAHPRA website ([www.sahpra.org.za](http://www.sahpra.org.za)). Alternatively, please complete the ADR reporting form accessible via the SAHPRA website and email it to [adr@sahpra.org.za](mailto:adr@sahpra.org.za). Additionally, reporting can be done via Med Safety App. The App can be downloaded into a smart mobile phone through google Play or App store. For more information on Med Safety App, please visit SAHPRA website. For more information on ADR reporting of products listed below, please contact the SAHPRA vigilance unit at [pvqueries@sahpra.org.za](mailto:pvqueries@sahpra.org.za) or alternatively use the contact details indicated below:



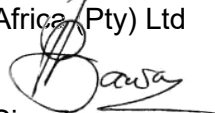
Table 1: Company Products

| Company                                         | Product name                       | Active ingredient                                  | Registration Number  | Contact details                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aspen Pharmacare                                | Aspen Mometasone Cream             | Mometasone furoate                                 | A38/13.4.1/0668      | Tel: +27 800 118 088<br>Fax: +27 11 239 6303<br><a href="mailto:drugsafety@aspenpharma.com">drugsafety@aspenpharma.com</a> |
|                                                 | Cortoderm Cream                    | Fluocinolone acetonide                             | L/13.4.1/42          |                                                                                                                            |
|                                                 | Cortoderm Ointment                 | Fluocinolone acetonide                             | L/13.4.1/29          |                                                                                                                            |
|                                                 | Dilucort Cream                     | Hydrocortisone acetate                             | R/13.4.1/21          |                                                                                                                            |
|                                                 | Dilucort Ointment                  | Hydrocortisone acetate                             | R/13.4.1/20          |                                                                                                                            |
|                                                 | Dovate Cream                       | Clobetasol propionate                              | 27/13.4.1/0316       |                                                                                                                            |
|                                                 | Dovate Ointment                    | Clobetasol propionate                              | 27/13.4.1/0122       |                                                                                                                            |
|                                                 | Lenovate Cream                     | Betamethasone valerate equivalent to Betamethasone | 27/13.4.1/0493       |                                                                                                                            |
|                                                 | Lenovate Ointment                  | Betamethasone valerate equivalent to Betamethasone | 27/13.4.1/0308       |                                                                                                                            |
|                                                 | Mylocort Cream                     | Hydrocortisone acetate                             | P/13.4.1/93          |                                                                                                                            |
|                                                 | Mylocort Ointment                  | Hydrocortisone acetate                             | P/13.4.1/112         |                                                                                                                            |
|                                                 | Persivate Cream                    | Betamethasone valerate equivalent to Betamethasone | L/13.4.1/382         |                                                                                                                            |
|                                                 | Persivate Ointment                 | Betamethasone valerate equivalent to Betamethasone | L/13.4.1/395         |                                                                                                                            |
| GlaxoSmith Kline (Pty) Ltd                      | Cutivate Cream                     | Fluticasone propionate                             | 27/13.4.1/0441       | Tel: +27 10 300 1000<br><a href="mailto:aereporting.za@gsk.com">aereporting.za@gsk.com</a>                                 |
| Glenmark Pharmaceuticals South Africa (Pty) Ltd | Synalar Gel                        | Fluocinolone acetonide                             | B/13.4.1/133         | Tel: +27 11 564 3900<br><a href="mailto:pv@glenmarkpharma.co.za">pv@glenmarkpharma.co.za</a>                               |
|                                                 | Synalar Cream                      | Fluocinolone acetonide                             | G1396 (Act 101/1965) |                                                                                                                            |
|                                                 | Synalar Ointment                   | Fluocinolone acetonide                             | G1397 (Act 101/1965) |                                                                                                                            |
|                                                 | Synalar-N Cream                    | Fluocinolone acetonide/ Neomycin sulphate          | G1400 (Act 101/1965) |                                                                                                                            |
|                                                 | Synalar-N Ointment                 | Fluocinolone acetonide/ Neomycin sulphate          | G1401 (Act 101/1965) |                                                                                                                            |
|                                                 | Synalar-C Cream                    | Fluocinolone acetonide/ Clioquinol                 | G1398 (Act 101/1965) |                                                                                                                            |
| Synalar-C Ointment                              | Fluocinolone acetonide/ Clioquinol | G1399 (Act 101/1965)                               |                      |                                                                                                                            |

**References**

1. Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA); Drug Safety Update; Volume 15, Issue 2: September 2021: 1.

Yours faithfully,

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| <p>Nikola Whelan<br/>Responsible Pharmacist<br/>Aspen Pharmacare</p>  <p>Signature</p> | <p>Dr Santoshni Govindasamy<br/>Country Medical Director South<br/>Africa<br/>GlaxoSmithKline (Pty) Ltd</p>  <p>Signature</p> | <p>Priya Bawa<br/>Responsible Pharmacist<br/>Glenmark Pharmaceuticals South<br/>Africa (Pty) Ltd</p>  <p>Signature</p> |
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