



## MEDICINE TO TREAT: BACTERIAL INFECTIONS

### TETRACYCLINES

Chlortetracycline  
Doxycycline  
Tetracycline

#### 1. What are the medicines used for?

Tetracyclines are a group of antibiotics that is used to treat or prevent infections caused by certain bacteria. These may include acne, malaria and infection of the eyes.

#### 2. How should I take the medicines?

##### Tetracycline/Doxycycline (Taken by mouth)

- Take tetracycline 1 hour before food or 2 hours after food.
- Take doxycycline with or after food.
- For both tetracycline and doxycycline, swallow your medicine with plenty of water while sitting or standing. This prevents irritation to your throat.
- Take milk, calcium, iron or antacid 2 hours before or after taking tetracycline and doxycycline.
- You should complete each course of antibiotics even if you feel better as incomplete treatment might cause the infection to return or cause antibiotic resistance. When antibiotic resistance happens, the antibiotic will not be able to control the growth or kill the bacteria anymore.
- If you miss a dose, take the missed dose as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for your next dose, take only the usual dose. Do not double your dose or use extra medicine to make up for the missed dose.

##### Chlortetracycline eye ointment

- Wash your hands before and after using the medicine.
- Using a finger, gently pull down the lower eyelid to form a pocket.
- Squeeze the ointment along the inside of the lower eyelid. Do not touch your eye with the tip of the ointment tube.
- Close your eye gently and do not blink too often. Do not rub your eyes. Wipe off any extra ointment around the eye with a piece of tissue paper.
- The use of the ointment might cause your sight to be blurred for a while but it should get better in 15-20 minutes.

- If you have to apply both an eye drop and an eye ointment, apply the eye drop first. Wait 10 minutes before you apply the ointment. If you apply the ointment first, it may make the eye drop less effective.
- Throw away your eye ointment 1 month after opening.
- If you miss an application, apply the missed dose as soon as you remember. However, if it is almost time for your next application, skip the dose you missed and apply only your next scheduled dose.
- Follow the instructions given by your doctor on the correct duration to use your medicine. Do not use the medicine longer than instructed.

#### Tetracycline skin ointment

- Spread the skin ointment on a piece of sterile gauze before applying it to your skin

### **3. What are the possible side effects of the medicines?**

If you experience any of the following serious side-effects, stop taking/applying the medicine and seek emergency medical attention:

- Dark urine, feeling tired, or yellow skin or eyes
- Diarrhoea that does not go away, stomach pain and blood or pus in your stool.
- Headache and changes to your sight

If tetracyclines are used in children younger than 8 years old, it might cause them to have a permanent change in the colour of their teeth.

Your skin may get sunburnt more easily when you are taking this medicine. Wear long-sleeved clothes, sunglasses and apply sunblock to protect yourself from the sun.

If you are taking tetracyclines for a long period of time, it might cause you to get a vaginal fungal infection. Symptoms include itching, a burning feel at the vaginal area and whitish grey, thick vaginal discharge. If this happens, you should see a doctor.

Other less serious side effects include diarrhoea or upset stomach.

### **4. How do I know if I am allergic to these medicines?**

The symptoms of a drug allergy include one or more of the following:

- Swollen face/eyes/lips
- Difficulty in breathing
- Itchy skin rashes over your whole body

If you experience any of these symptoms, you should stop your medicine immediately and see your doctor.

## **5. What precautions should I follow when taking the medicines?**

- Before starting on these medicines, inform your doctor if you
  - Had a previous allergic reaction to tetracycline antibiotics
  - Are pregnant or breastfeeding
  - Have kidney problems
  - Have liver problems
  - Are taking isotretinoin, a medicine used to treat acne
  - Are taking acitretin, a medicine used to treat psoriasis
  
- Tetracyclines can affect the levels of other medicines in your body. Do let your doctor or pharmacist know what other medicines, including over-the-counter medicines, vitamins and herbal products you are taking before starting on your antibiotic.

## **6. How should I store the medicines?**

- Keep your medicines in the original container or packaging, tightly closed or sealed in a cool and dry place, away from direct sunlight.
- Keep the medicine out of reach of children.
- Throw away all expired medicines.

This leaflet answers some common questions about this medicine. It does not contain all the available information. It also does not take the place of talking to your doctor or pharmacist