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Preparations for piles – containing a corticosteroid (Anusol-HC, Proctosedyl, Scheriproct)

Common symptoms of piles (haemorrhoids) are pain, and bleeding after going to the toilet.

Preparations containing corticosteroids reduce inflammation, which helps to ease discomfort.

Do not use the preparation for longer than seven days at a time.

About preparations for piles containing a corticosteroid

Used for	Piles (haemorrhoids) in adults
Also called	Anusol-HC®; Anusol Plus HC®; Proctosedyl®; Scheriproct®; Uniroid-HC®; Xyloproct®
Available as	Cream, ointment, suppositories

Piles (haemorrhoids) are swellings that can occur around the back passage. Small blood vessels in these areas sometimes become wider and fill with more blood than usual. These blood vessels, and the tissues around them, then form into small swellings, called haemorrhoids. The most common symptom is bleeding after going to the toilet. Larger haemorrhoids can cause pain, irritation, and itching.

If there is a lot of swelling associated with the haemorrhoid, your doctor or pharmacist may recommend a preparation containing a corticosteroid (which is more commonly referred to as a 'steroid'). Typical steroids used for haemorrhoids are hydrocortisone, prednisolone, and fluocortolone. They reduce inflammation, and this helps to ease itching and pain. Some preparations also contain a local anaesthetic and/or other soothing agents.

You can buy some of these preparations without a prescription at pharmacies and other retail outlets. Others are only available on prescription. This type of preparation is suitable for short-term use only - for no more than seven days at a time.

Before using the preparation

To make sure that this is the right treatment for you, before you start using it, speak with a doctor or pharmacist if:

- You are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- You think the area to be treated might be infected.
- You have ever had an allergic reaction to a medicine, or to any creams or ointments.

How to use the preparation

- Before you start the treatment, read the manufacturer's printed information leaflet from inside the pack. It will give you more information about the specific preparation you have been given, and will also provide you with a full list of any side-effects which you could experience from using it.
- The directions for using the preparation will be printed on the packaging. As a guide, most preparations are recommended to be used twice daily (morning and evening) and after a bowel movement.

- Some creams and ointments are intended to be used on the skin around the back passage only. Some others contain an applicator or nozzle, so that the preparation can be applied inside the back passage. If you have been instructed to use the preparation internally, use the applicator provided. Wash and rinse the applicator/nozzle after each use.

How to use suppositories

1. Remove the suppository from the wrapping.
2. Stand with one leg raised on a chair (or lie down on your side if you prefer).
3. Using your finger, gently push the suppository into your back passage as far as comfortable. You may find this easier to do if you moisten the suppository with a little water first.
4. Remain still for a little while to help hold the suppository in place.
5. Wash your hands afterwards.

How to use a rectal spray

1. Before you use the spray for the first time, remove the cap and press the pump down once or twice. This will 'prime' the pump to make it ready for use.
2. Point the spray at the area around your bottom and press the pump down once.
3. Replace the cap and wash your hands afterwards.

Getting the most from your treatment

- The preparation should only be used for short periods of time. Do not use it for longer than seven days at a time.
- Try to avoid becoming constipated, as this can lead to you straining at the toilet. You can do this by eating foods containing fibre (such as fruit, vegetables, cereals and wholemeal bread) and drinking plenty of water each day.

- Go to the toilet as soon as you feel the need. Some people suppress the feeling and plan to go to the toilet later. This can result in bigger and harder stools forming, which are then more difficult to pass.
- If your symptoms do not improve, or if significant bleeding occurs, make an appointment to see your doctor as soon as possible.

Can these preparations cause problems?

Along with their useful effects, most medicines can cause unwanted side-effects although not everyone experiences them. The table below contains the most common one associated with topical preparations for piles (haemorrhoids). You will find a full list in the manufacturer's information leaflet supplied with your medicine. The unwanted effects usually improve as your body adjusts to the new medicine, but speak with your doctor or pharmacist if any of the following side-effects continue or become troublesome.

Possible side-effects	What can I do if I experience this?
A feeling of burning, tingling or stinging	This should soon pass. If it continues, stop using the preparation

If you experience any other symptoms which you think may be due to the preparation, speak with your doctor or pharmacist for further advice.

How to store the preparation

- Keep all medicines out of the reach and sight of children.
- Store in a cool, dry place, away from direct heat and light.

Important information about all medicines

This preparation is not intended to be ingested. If someone swallows some of it by accident, go to the accident and emergency department of your local hospital. Take the container with you, even if it is empty.

This medicine is for you. Never give it to other people even if their condition appears to be the same as yours.

Do not keep out-of-date or unwanted medicines. Take them to your local pharmacy which will dispose of them for you.

If you have any questions about this medicine ask your pharmacist.

If you experience side effects, you can report them online through the [Yellow Card website](#).

Further reading

- [Manufacturer's PIL, Anusol HC Ointment](#); Church and Dwight UK Ltd, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated August 2017.
- [Medicines Complete BNF 88th Edition](#); British Medical Association and Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, London.

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Last updated by: Michael Stewart, MRPharmS 24/06/2022	
Peer reviewed by: Sid Dajani 24/06/2022	Next review date: 23/06/2025

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