

# ACIVIR™ CREAM FOR COLD SORES

Aciclovir 5%

Acivir Pump Leaflet/ Tube leaflet

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## Consumer Medicine Information

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### How does Acivir Cream for Cold Sores work?

Acivir contains the antiviral agent Aciclovir. When it is applied to the cold sore at the tingle stage, it enters the virus infected cells and is converted to aciclovir triphosphate which is responsible for preventing the virus from multiplying. Therefore it is important to start treatment at the first onset of symptoms - the tingle stage.

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### What is a cold sore?

Cold Sores are lesions produced by a virus called the Herpes Simplex Virus. Usually blisters appear in the lip area and are sometimes referred to as fever blisters. Although most of the population carry the virus, differences in the efficiency of the immune system may be the reason that some individuals suffer from recurrence of cold sores.

Clearance of the lesions after the first attack does not result in a cure. After the first attack the virus retreats into a nerve junction until it is reactivated by some trigger factors. These trigger factors include other infections such as cold and flu, stress, stomach upset, physical abrasions, general ill health, other medicines or UV radiation (in sunlight).

The first warning signs of a recurrence is an itching, burning and tingling sensation with pain. This stage is usually followed by skin ulceration and crusting after 24 to 36 hours. During this stage the virus is most active and discomfort most intense. The lesions usually heal within 7 - 14 days. Cold sores are infectious and patients can pass on the infection to other people through kissing or sharing of eating or drinking utensils or towels.

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### How do I use Acivir Cream for Cold Sores?

- **Use Acivir Cream for cold sores at the first sign of the symptoms of a cold sore - the tingle stage.**
- **Wash your hands before and after you have applied the cream to the cold sore. This is to avoid infecting another area such as the eye or passing on the infection to someone else.**
- **Apply Acivir cream 5 times daily about every four hours. If you forget a treatment, apply some as soon as you remember, then continue as before.**
- **Continue treatment for 5 days. If your cold sore has not healed after this time or your cold sore becomes very severe, consult your doctor.**
- **Acivir cream for cold sores should not be used inside the mouth or in the eyes.**

- **Use in pregnancy or during breastfeeding should be avoided unless advised by a doctor.**

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### Some points to remember

- Blisters should not be broken or picked at. This may make the cold sore worse or the virus may infect the finger.
- Avoid kissing, especially children when you have a cold sore.
- Do not share towels or eating or drinking utensils with other people.
- Use total sunblock sunscreen as an added precaution against recurrence.

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