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Abreva

Generic name: [docosanol topical](#) [*doe-KOE-sa-nol*]

Drug class: [Topical anti-infectives](#)



[Medically reviewed](#) by Drugs.com on Dec 9, 2024. Written by [Cerner Multum](#).

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What is Abreva?

Abreva (for the skin) is used to treat [cold sores](#) on the face and lips.

[Docosanol](#) may also be used for purposes not listed in this medication guide.

Abreva side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction**: hives; feeling light-headed; [wheezing](#), difficult breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Less serious side effects may be more likely, and you may have none at all.

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.



[Abreva side effects](#) (more detail)

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infections caused by herpes viruses
including genital herpes ...

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8.6 / 10

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Warnings

Follow all directions on your medicine label and package. Tell each of your healthcare providers about all your medical conditions, allergies, and all medicines you use.

Before taking this medicine

You should not use Abreva if you are allergic to it.

Ask a doctor before using Abreva if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Do not use this medicine on a child younger than 12 years old without medical advice.

How should I use Abreva?

Use exactly as directed on the label, or as prescribed by your doctor.

Do not take by mouth. Topical medicine is for use only on the skin. **Rinse with water if this medicine gets in your eyes or mouth.**

Apply this medicine at the first sign of a cold sore, such as tingling, redness, [itching](#), or a blister.

Wash your hands before and after applying Abreva.

Remove any cosmetics before applying Abreva. Apply enough medicine to completely cover the cold sore. Rub in gently and completely.

Call your doctor if your symptoms do not improve within 10 days, or if they get worse.

Store at room temperature away from moisture and heat. Do not freeze.

 [Detailed Abreva dosage information](#)

What happens if I miss a dose?

Apply the medicine as soon as you can, but skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next dose. **Do not** apply two doses at one time.

What happens if I overdose?

An overdose of docosanol is not expected to be dangerous. Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222 if anyone has accidentally swallowed the medication.

What should I avoid while using Abreva?

Do not share Abreva with another person, even if they have the same symptoms you have. Sharing this medicine may spread the [infection](#).

Avoid getting this medicine in your eyes or mouth.

What other drugs will affect Abreva?

Medicine used on the skin is not likely to be affected by other drugs you use. But many drugs can interact with each other. Tell each of your healthcare providers about all medicines you use, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, [vitamins](#), and [herbal products](#).

Does Abreva interact with my other drugs?

Enter medications to view a detailed interaction report using our [Drug Interaction Checker](#).

Abreva

+

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Professional resources

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- [Docosanol \(AHFS Monograph\)](#)

Related treatment guides

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Further information

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use this medication only for the indication prescribed.

Always consult your healthcare provider to ensure the information displayed on this page applies to your personal circumstances.

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DRUG STATUS

Availability

OTC Over the counter

[Pregnancy & Lactation](#)

 Risk data available

CSA Schedule*

N/A Not a controlled drug



Approval History

10+ years FDA approved 2000



User Reviews & Ratings

4.5 / 10

[426 Reviews](#)

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