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Zostrix

Generic name: [capsaicin topical](#) [*kap-SAY-sin-TOP-i-kal*]**Brand names:** [Aspercreme Warming Pain Relief Patch](#), [Capzasin Back and Body](#), [Capzasin-HP](#), [Capzasin-P](#), [Castiva Warming](#), ... [show all 17 brands](#)**Drug class:** [Miscellaneous topical agents](#)[Medically reviewed](#) by Drugs.com on Aug 4, 2023. Written by [Cerner Multum](#).[Uses](#) [Side effects](#) [Warnings](#) [Before taking](#) [Dosage](#) [Interactions](#) [FAQ](#)

What is Zostrix?

[Capsaicin](#) is the active ingredient in chili peppers that makes them hot. Capsaicin is used in medicated creams and lotions to relieve muscle or [joint pain](#).

Capsaicin used on the body causes a sensation of heat that activates certain nerve cells. With regular use of capsaicin, this heating effect reduces the amount of substance P, a chemical that acts as a pain messenger in the body.

Zostrix is used for temporary relief of muscle or joint pain caused by strains, sprains, [arthritis](#), bruising, or backaches. This medicine is also used to treat [nerve pain](#) ([neuralgia](#)) in people who have had [herpes zoster](#), or "[shingles](#)."

Qutenza is a prescription-strength form of capsaicin topical that is applied by a healthcare professional. [Qutenza](#) is used to treat nerve pain caused by herpes, and also to treat nerve pain in the feet ([peripheral neuropathy](#)) in people with [diabetes](#).

Zostrix may also be used for purposes not listed in Zostrix guide.

Zostrix side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction**: hives; difficulty breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Wash the skin and get medical attention right away if you have severe burning, pain, swelling, or blistering of the skin where you applied this medicine.

Zostrix may cause serious side effects. Stop using Zostrix and call your doctor at once if you have:

- severe pain or skin redness where the medicine was applied;
- loss of feeling;
- trouble breathing or swallowing (after accidental inhalation of capsaicin odor or dried residue).

Common side effects may include pain or a burning sensation that can last for several hours or days (especially after your first use of capsaicin topical).

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.

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

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Warnings

Do not use Zostrix if you are allergic to chili peppers, or if you have ever had an allergic reaction to Zostrix.

Capsaicin can cause a burning sensation wherever it is applied. If you have severe discomfort or skin redness, wash the treated skin area with soap and cool water.

Get medical attention right away if you have severe burning, pain, swelling, or blistering of the skin where you applied this medicine.

Before taking this medicine

Do not use this medicine if you are allergic to chili peppers, or if you have ever had an allergic reaction to Zostrix.

Tell your doctor if you have ever had:

- any allergies (especially to plants); or
- a serious medical condition.

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

Do not apply Zostrix to your breast area if you are breastfeeding a baby.

Do not use this medicine on anyone younger than 18 years old without the advice of a doctor.

How should I use Zostrix?

Use exactly as directed on the label, or as prescribed by your doctor. The **Qutenza** brand of capsaicin is applied only by a healthcare professional and is not available over the counter.

Do not take by mouth. Topical medicine is for use only on the skin.

Capsaicin is available in different forms, such as a cream, lotion, liquid, and skin patch. **Read and carefully follow any Instructions for Use provided with your medicine.** Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you do not understand these instructions.

Do not use Zostrix on open wounds or on sunburned, windburned, dry, chapped, or irritated skin. **If this medicine gets in your eyes, nose, mouth, rectum, or vagina, rinse with water.**

Make sure your skin is clean and dry before you apply Zostrix.

Wash your hands with soap and water immediately after applying Zostrix or handling a topical skin patch. If you have applied the medicine to your hands or fingers to treat pain in those areas, wait at least 30 minutes before washing your hands.

To prevent getting this medicine on your fingers, use a rubber glove, finger cot, cotton ball, or clean tissue to apply the medicine.

Capsaicin can cause a burning sensation wherever it is applied. Even if the medicine gets on a surface other than your skin, you may feel burning when you later touch that surface. This sensation is usually mild and should gradually lessen over time with continued regular use of the medicine.

If the burning sensation is painful or causes severe discomfort, wash the treated skin area with soap and cool water. **Get medical attention right away if you have severe burning, pain, swelling, or blistering.**

Do not cover treated skin with a bandage or heating pad, which can increase the burning sensation. You may cover the skin with clothing.

Avoid taking a bath or shower within 1 hour before or after you apply capsaicin to your skin. Also avoid swimming or vigorous exercise. Warm water or perspiration can increase the burning sensation caused by capsaicin.

Avoid getting Zostrix in your eyes or near your nose where you might inhale it. If it does get into any of these areas, rinse thoroughly with water.

Also avoid getting this medicine on contact lenses, dentures, and other items that come into contact with sensitive areas of your body.

It may take up to 2 weeks of using this medicine regularly before your symptoms improve. For best results, keep using the medicine as directed. Pain relief should occur gradually as the substance P in your body is decreased in the nerve cells.

Call your doctor if your pain does not improve after using this medicine for 7 days, or if your symptoms get worse or get better and then come back in a few days.

Store Zostrix at room temperature away from moisture and heat, in a place where children and pets cannot get to it.

Zostrix **liquid** is flammable. Do not use or store near fire or open flame.

 [Detailed Zostrix dosage information](#)

What happens if I miss a dose?

Use the missed dose as soon as you remember. Skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next scheduled dose.

Do not apply capsaicin more than 4 times in one day, or use extra medicine to make up a missed dose.

A missed dose of Zostrix will not cause harm but may make the medicine less effective reducing substance P and relieving your pain.

What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222, especially if anyone has accidentally swallowed it.

Accidental swallowing of capsaicin can cause severe burning in or around the mouth, watery eyes, runny nose, and trouble swallowing or breathing.

Applying too much Zostrix to the skin can cause severe burning or redness.

What should I avoid while using Zostrix?

Avoid inhaling the odor or dried residue of capsaicin topical. Inhaling capsaicin can cause coughing, sneezing, or watery eyes, and can irritate your throat or lungs.

Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, nose, genitals, or rectum until the medicine has been washed off your hands. Also avoid handling food while the medicine is still on your hands.

Avoid exposing treated skin to sunlight, sunlamps, tanning beds, or a hot tub. Capsaicin can cause a burning sensation that may be made worse by heat.

Do not use other medicated skin products, including [muscle pain](#) creams or lotions, on areas where you have applied capsaicin, unless your doctor has told you to.

What other drugs will affect Zostrix?

It is not likely that other drugs you take orally or inject will have an effect on topically applied capsaicin. But many drugs can interact with each other. Tell each of your health care providers about all medicines you use, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, [vitamins](#), and [herbal products](#).

 [Zostrix drug interactions](#) (more detail)

Does Zostrix interact with my other drugs?

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

Zostrix

+

Enter a drug name

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Popular FAQ

Does Qutenza contain red chili peppers?



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Professional resources

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[Qutenza](#)

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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
 Rx and/or OTC

Pregnancy & Lactation
 Risk data available

CSA Schedule*
N/A Not a controlled drug



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