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2. Coal tar

Coal tar topical

Generic name: coal tar topical [*KOL-TAR-TOP-ik-al*]

Brand names: [Anti-Dandruff](#), [Balnetar](#), Coal Tar, [DHS Tar Shampoo](#), [lonil T](#), ... [show all 65 brands](#)

Dosage forms: topical foam (2%), topical gel (1.25%), topical lotion (1.5%; 1%; 5%), topical oil (2.5%; 5%), ... [show all 7 dosage forms](#)

Drug class: [Miscellaneous topical agents](#)



[Medically reviewed](#) by Drugs.com on Mar 5, 2024. Written by [Cerner Multum](#).

[Uses](#) [Side effects](#) [Warnings](#) [Before taking](#) [What to avoid](#) [Interactions](#)

What is coal tar?

Coal tar is a by-product of coal processing.

Coal tar topical (for the skin) is used to treat the skin symptoms of [psoriasis](#), including dryness, redness, flaking, scaling, and [itching](#). **Coal tar is not a cure for psoriasis**, and it will provide only temporary relief of skin symptoms.

Coal tar may also be used for purposes not listed in this medication guide.

Coal tar side effects

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

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

- severe stinging, burning, swelling, or other irritation of the treated skin.

Common side effects may include mild skin irritation or skin [rash](#).

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.



[Coal tar topical side effects](#) (more detail)

Related/similar drugs

Stelara

Stelara (ustekinumab) is used to treat

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis,
plaque psoriasis, and ...

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ulcerative colitis ...

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arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, ulcerative
colitis and Crohn's ...

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Avsola, Inflectra, Remicade, and
others) reduces inflammation and ...

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Adalimumab

Adalimumab is used to treat plaque psoriasis, Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, rheumatoid ...

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Hydrocortisone topical

Hydrocortisone cream is used to treat eczema, dermatitis, psoriasis, hemorrhoids, insect bites or ...

Reviews & ratings

7.0 / 10

[63 Reviews](#)

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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 coal tar topical if you are allergic to coal tar.

Ask a doctor or pharmacist if it is safe for you to use this medicine if you have other medical conditions, especially:

- if you are allergic to any drugs; or
- if you are receiving ultraviolet radiation treatment for your psoriasis.

Coal tar products may contain [lanolin](#), [mineral oil](#), or other emulsifiers. Check the label of any coal tar product you are using. Talk with your doctor before using coal tar if you are allergic to any of the ingredients.

Ask a doctor before using this medicine if you are pregnant or breast-feeding.

Do not allow a young child to use this medicine without adult supervision.

How should I use coal tar?

Use exactly as directed on the label, or as prescribed by your doctor. Do not use in larger or smaller amounts or for longer than recommended.

Apply coal tar cream, lotion, ointment, or solution according to the directions on the medication label. Some forms of coal tar may be applied 1 to 4 times per day.

To use coal tar bath oil, pour 1 to 3 capfuls into a warm bath before bathing. The oil can make the bathtub slippery. Take care to avoid a fall.

Shake the coal tar shampoo well just before each use. Use enough shampoo to create a rich lather. Massage the shampoo into your scalp and rinse thoroughly. Apply the shampoo a second time and leave it on your scalp for 5 minutes. Rinse thoroughly.

Coal tar shampoo may discolor blond or colored hair. This effect is usually temporary.

Do not use coal tar to treat large skin areas. Do not use coal tar over long periods of time without your doctor's advice.

Some forms of coal tar can stain fabric or other surfaces.

Call your doctor if your symptoms do not improve, or if they get worse while using coal tar topical.

Store at room temperature away from moisture and heat. Keep the medicine tightly closed when not in use.

What happens if I miss a dose?

Since coal tar topical is used when needed, you may not be on a dosing schedule. If you are on a schedule, 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** use extra medicine to make up the missed dose.

What happens if I overdose?

An overdose of coal tar topical 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 coal tar?

Do not use coal tar together with other psoriasis medications unless your doctor tells you to.

Avoid getting coal tar topical in your eyes. If this does occur, rinse with water.

Do not use coal tar to treat the skin of your groin or rectal area.

Avoid exposure to sunlight or artificial UV rays (sunlamps or tanning beds). Coal tar can make your skin more sensitive to sunlight and [sunburn](#) may result.

What other drugs will affect coal tar?

It is not likely that other drugs you take orally or inject will have an effect on topically applied coal tar. 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](#).

 [Coal tar topical drug interactions](#) (more detail)

Does coal tar topical interact with my other drugs?

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

+

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More about coal tar topical

- [Check interactions](#)
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- [Reviews \(26\)](#)
- [Side effects](#)
- [Drug class: miscellaneous topical agents](#)
- [Breastfeeding](#)

Patient resources

- [Coal tar advanced reading](#)
- [Coal Tar Cream, Gel, and Ointment](#)
- [Coal Tar Foam](#)
- [Coal Tar Lotion](#)
- [Coal Tar Shampoo](#)

Other brands

[Therapeutic](#), [Anti-Dandruff](#), [MG217 Psoriasis](#), [Neutrogena T/Gel](#), ... +20 more

Professional resources

- [Coal Tar monograph](#)

Related treatment guides

- [Psoriasis](#)
- [Dermatitis](#)
- [Seborrheic Dermatitis](#)

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.

[Medical Disclaimer](#)

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DRUG STATUS

Availability	
<div><div>Rx</div><div>OTC</div></div>	Rx and/or OTC
CSA Schedule*	
N/A	Not a controlled drug



User Reviews & Ratings

8.0 / 10

[26 Reviews](#)

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