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Altabax Ointment

Generic name: [retapamulin topical](#) [*RE-te-PAM-ue-lin*]

Brand name: Altabax

Drug class: [Topical antibiotics](#)

Medically reviewed by [Philip Thornton, DipPharm](#). Last updated on Feb 24, 2025.

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What is Altabax?

Altabax is an [antibiotic](#) that fights bacteria on the skin.

Altabax Ointment is used to treat an infection called [impetigo](#) (im-pe-TYE-go). Impetigo usually affects the nose, lips, or other areas of the face, but it may also affect other areas of the body.

Altabax Ointment is for use in adults and infants aged 9 months and older.

Warnings

Do not use Altabax to treat any skin condition that has not been checked by your doctor.

Do not share Altabax with another person, even if they have the same symptoms you have. Impetigo is highly contagious and spreads easily from person to person. Each member of the household should be seen by a doctor if they start to show symptoms of impetigo. Stop using Altabax and call your doctor at once if you have severe burning, itching, redness, swelling, blistering, oozing, or other skin irritation where the medicine was applied.

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

Altabax is not approved for use by anyone younger than 9 months old.

Tell your doctor if you are pregnant

It may not be safe to breast-feed while using Altabax. Ask your doctor about any risk.

 [Altabax pregnancy and breastfeeding warnings](#) (more detail)

How should I use Altabax?

Use Altabax exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Follow all directions on your prescription label and read all medication guides or instruction sheets.

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

Apply a thin layer of Altabax Ointment to the affected area.

Wash your hands after applying this medicine, or after touching your skin lesions for any other reason. The bacteria that causes impetigo can infect any skin area that comes into contact with your lesions.

Take care not to wash the medicine off any skin on your hands that you are treating with this medicine.

You may cover the treated skin areas with a bandage or clean gauze after applying the medicine.

Use this medicine for the full prescribed length of time, even if your symptoms quickly improve. Skipping doses can increase your risk of infection that is resistant to medication.

Do not use Altabax to treat any skin condition that has not been checked by your doctor.

Do not share this medicine with another person, even if they have the same symptoms you have. Each member of the household should be seen by a doctor if they start to show symptoms of impetigo.

Use Altabax Ointment for 5 days in a row. Call your doctor if your symptoms do not improve after 3 to 4 days.

Store at room temperature away from moisture and heat.

Dosing information

Usual Adult Dose for Impetigo:

Apply a thin layer to the affected area (up to 100 cm² in total area) twice a day for 5 days

Comments:

-Consider alternative therapy if there is no improvement or worsening in the affected area after 2 to 3 days of treatment.

Use: Topical treatment of impetigo due to methicillin-susceptible *Staphylococcus aureus* or *Streptococcus pyogenes*

Usual Pediatric Dose for Impetigo:

Apply a thin layer to the affected area (up to 2% total body surface area) twice a day for 5 days

Comments:

-For pediatric patients aged 9 months or older.

-Concomitant use with strong CYP450 3A4 inhibitors is not recommended in patients younger than 24 months of age due to the higher systemic exposure of the drug in this patient population.

-Consider alternative therapy if there is no improvement or worsening in the affected area after 2 to 3 days of treatment.

Use: Topical treatment of impetigo due to methicillin-susceptible *Staphylococcus aureus* or *Streptococcus pyogenes*

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 Altabax 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 Altabax?

Impetigo is highly contagious and spreads easily from person to person. Avoid sharing personal items such as towels, washcloths, or razors with other people if you are infected with impetigo. Use a clean towel and washcloth each time you bathe to keep from reinfecting your own skin.

Avoid getting this medication in your eyes, nose, or mouth, or inside your vagina. If this does happen, rinse with water.

Avoid using other medications on the areas you treat with Altabax unless your doctor tells you to.

Altabax side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction to Altabax**: [hives](#); difficulty breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Wipe the ointment off your skin and call your doctor at once if you have:

- severe burning, itching, redness, swelling, blistering, oozing, or other skin irritation where the medicine was applied; or
- new or worsening signs of [skin infection](#).

Common Altabax side effects may include:

- mild itching or skin irritation; or
- [headache](#).

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.

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

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What other drugs will affect Altabax?

Medicine used on the skin is not likely to be affected by other drugs you use. But many drugs can interact with each other.

Children younger than 2 years old can absorb larger amounts of this medicine through the skin than adults. This could make it more likely that retapamulin topical could interact with other medications the child is using, especially antifungal or antiviral medicine, or other [antibiotics](#).

Tell each of your healthcare providers about all medicines you use, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, [vitamins](#), and [herbal products](#).

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

Does Altabax interact with my other drugs?

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

Altabax

+

Enter a drug name

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Professional resources

- [Altabax prescribing information](#)
- [Retapamulin \(AHFS Monograph\)](#)

Related treatment guides

- [Impetigo](#)

- [Acne](#)

Further information

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use Altabax Ointment 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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[List of Common Antibiotics & Types](#)

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[Probiotics and Antibiotics](#)

[Antibiotics for Strep Throat](#)

[Antibiotics for a Tooth Infection](#)

[Antibiotics for UTI's](#)

DRUG STATUS

Availability

Rx Prescription only

[Pregnancy & Lactation](#)

 Risk data available

CSA Schedule*

N/A Not a controlled drug



Approval History

10+ years FDA approved 2007



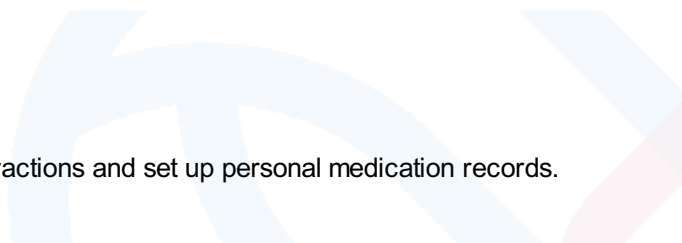
User Reviews & Ratings

8.5 / 10

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