



[Home](#)

2. Penciclovir

Penciclovir topical

Generic name: penciclovir topical [*pen-SYE-kloe-veer-TOP-ik-al*]

Brand name: [Denavir](#)

Dosage form: topical cream (1%)

Drug class: [Topical antivirals](#)



[Medically reviewed](#) by Drugs.com on Nov 20, 2024. Written by [Cerner Multum](#).

[Uses](#) [Side effects](#) [Warnings](#) [Before taking](#) [Dosage](#) [Interactions](#)

What is penciclovir topical?

Penciclovir topical (for the skin) is an antiviral medication that is used to treat [cold sores](#) on the lips that are caused by the [herpes simplex](#) virus. penciclovir topical is for adults and children who are at least 12 years old.

Penciclovir topical is **not a cure for cold sores** and you may continue to have them in the future.

Penciclovir topical may also be used for purposes not listed in this medication guide.

Penciclovir topical 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.

Call your doctor at once if you have severe skin redness, [itching](#), [rash](#), or pain after applying this medicine.

Common side effects of penciclovir topical may include:

- numbness or tingling where the medicine was applied;
- [headache](#); or
- changes in your sense of taste.

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.



[Penciclovir topical side effects](#) (more detail)

Related/similar drugs

Valtrex

Valtrex is an antiviral drug used to treat infections caused by herpes viruses. Learn about side ...

Reviews & ratings

8.6 / 10

[303 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

Zovirax

Zovirax treats viral infections caused by genital herpes, cold sores, shingles, and chicken pox ...

Reviews & ratings

8.2 / 10

[17 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

FEATURED

Ozempic

Learn about Ozempic (semaglutide) for type 2 diabetes treatment, weight management, cardiovascular ...

Reviews & ratings

6.6 / 10

[1,504 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

Orajel

Orajel is a topical treatment for the mouth and gums that may be used to relieve pain associated ...

Reviews & ratings

5.3 / 10

[13 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

Valacyclovir

Valacyclovir is used to treat genital herpes, cold sores, shingles, and chicken pox. Learn about

chicken pox. Learn about ...

Reviews & ratings

8.3 / 10

[495 Reviews](#)

[View more](#)

Warnings

Do not apply penciclovir topical to the inside of the nose or in or near the eyes.

Before taking this medicine

You should not use penciclovir topical if you are allergic to it.

Since penciclovir topical is not absorbed into the body, using penciclovir topical is not expected to be harmful if you are pregnant or breast-feeding.

Penciclovir topical is not approved for use by anyone younger than 12 years old.

How should I use penciclovir topical?

Follow all directions on your prescription label and read all medication guides or instruction sheets. Use the medicine exactly as directed.

Penciclovir topical is for use only on the lips and face. **If this medicine gets in your nose or mouth, rinse with water.**

Start using this medicine when you first notice cold sore symptoms (tingling, redness, itching, or a bump).

Wash your hands before and after applying the medicine.

Apply every 2 hours throughout the day for 4 days in a row.

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

Store at room temperature.

Penciclovir topical dosing information

Usual Adult Dose for Herpes Simplex Labialis:

Apply cream to affected area every 2 hours while awake

Duration of therapy: 4 days

Comments: Treatment should begin as early as possible (i.e., during the prodrome or when lesions appear).

Use: For the treatment of recurrent herpes labialis (cold sores)

Usual Pediatric Dose for Herpes Simplex Labialis:

12 years or older: Apply cream to affected area every 2 hours while awake

Duration of therapy: 4 days

Comments: Treatment should begin as early as possible (i.e., during the prodrome or when lesions appear).

Use: For the treatment of recurrent herpes labialis (cold sores)

 [Detailed Penciclovir topical 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 penciclovir 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 penciclovir topical?

Do not apply penciclovir topical to the inside of your nose or near your eyes.

What other drugs will affect penciclovir topical?

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](#).

 [Penciclovir topical drug interactions](#) (more detail)

Does penciclovir topical interact with my other drugs?

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

penciclovir topical

+

Enter a drug name

Add

More about penciclovir topical

- [Check interactions](#)
- [Compare alternatives](#)

- [Pricing & coupons](#)
- [Reviews \(68\)](#)
- [Side effects](#)
- [Dosage information](#)
- [During pregnancy](#)
- [Drug class: topical antivirals](#)
- [Breastfeeding](#)
- [En español](#)

Patient resources

- [Penciclovir advanced reading](#)
- [Penciclovir](#)

Other brands

[Denavir](#)

Professional resources

- [Penciclovir monograph](#)
- [Penciclovir Cream \(FDA\)](#)

Other brands

[Denavir](#)

Related treatment guides

- [Cold Sores](#)

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](#)


Copyright 1996-2025 Cerner Multum, Inc. Version: 3.01.

DRUG STATUS

Availability

Rx Prescription only


Pregnancy & Lactation

 Risk data available

CSA Schedule*

N/A Not a controlled drug

Approval History

 Drug history at FDA



User Reviews & Ratings

9.0 / 10

[68 Reviews](#)

Drugs.com Mobile App

Access drug & treatment information, identify pills, check interactions and set up personal medication records.



About

[About Drugs.com](#)

[Advertising policy](#)

[Attribution & citations](#)

Terms & privacy

[Terms of use](#)

[Editorial policy](#)

[Privacy policy](#)

Support

[Help center](#)

[Sitemap](#)

[Contact us](#)



[Subscribe to our newsletter](#) for the latest medication news, new drug approvals and FDA alerts.

Drugs.com provides accurate and independent information on more than 24,000 prescription drugs, over-the-counter medicines and natural products. This material is provided for educational purposes only and is not intended for medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Data sources include Micromedex (updated 7 Apr 2025), Cerner Multum™ (updated 13 Apr 2025), ASHP (updated 10 Apr 2025) and others.



Ad Choices
ADVERTISEMENT



Copyright © 2000-2025 Drugs.com. All rights reserved.