

## Anthralin: Treatment for psoriasis

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Until an effective and safe oral treatment for psoriasis becomes available, our treatment is limited to medications applied directly to the skin.

Anthralin was introduced almost 70 years ago and has proven safe and effective in treating chronic psoriasis. However, it often results in irritation to the skin and/or staining of bedclothes. For this reason, it has only received limited use and many patients do not use it consistently even when prescribed.

Family Dermatology uses Anthralin in a method called "short contact therapy." Because the Anthralin cream is not left on the skin for a long time, irritation is minimized and there is less chance of staining clothes or linens.

### Proper use:

Apply the Anthralin cream carefully to psoriatic lesions, being careful not to rub it into the surrounding, normal skin. You may want to wear old clothing when you apply the cream, just in case it gets stained.

The first time you use Anthralin, you should leave it on for 10 minutes, then wash it off thoroughly in the tub or shower. Family Dermatology will provide you with a special cleanser for your skin. Be sure to cleanse your tub or shower immediately after you get out to prevent staining.

If your first treatment does not irritate the skin, the next day, you should apply the Anthralin again and leave it on for 15 minutes before washing it off.

If the second treatment does not irritate the skin, continue adding 5 minutes to the treatment time each day until you reach the *maximum treatment time of one hour*. If at any point your skin becomes red and irritated, you should continue the medication with a reduced treatment time that does not cause irritation and schedule an appointment to discuss your treatment with your Family Dermatology doctor.

If at any point your doctor increases the concentration of the Anthralin cream you are using, you should start the process over with a 10-minute treatment, increasing the time a little each day to be certain that irritation doesn't occur.

If you see tan or pink staining around the lesions but do not have burning or stinging, it means you haven't completely washed off all of the Anthralin. You will need to cleanse the area more thoroughly to prevent further staining.

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