Using Betnovate scalp application as ear drops

Your doctor has prescribed you Betnovate to treat or manage your ear condition. Ask your clinic nurse if you have any queries.

What is Betnovate?

You have been given Betnovate scalp application to use as ear drops. This medicine was originally licensed for the treatment of eczema on the scalp; however, we are prescribing it to be used in an unlicensed way as ear drops. This is to try to manage the excessive amount of skin that is building up in your ear canals as a result of your eczema type condition. Although this is a scalp application, it is perfectly safe to use in your ear canals.

These drops are a steroid-based medication and must only be used as directed. Steroids are a group of drugs which are effective anti-inflammatories. When used in your ears, they can reduce the over-production of skin which is contributing to your problems. However, it is important that you do not use too much of this medication, as is can cause the already naturally thin normal skin in your ear to get thinner.

It is important that you follow these instructions carefully.

How to use Betnovate as ear drops

First two weeks of treatment:

- Warm the drops to body temperature before you use them. You can do this easily by placing the bottle in your pocket for half an hour before use. This will warm the drops enough, so that they do not feel too cold when they go into your ear.
- You may find that the first time you use the drops you experience a slight hot or burning type of sensation – this is normal and should wear off after 15 minutes.
- Put **two drops** in your affected ear/ears, every night for **two weeks**, **then STOP**.

After two weeks of treatment, use the drops as follows:

- **Two drops** of solution **only** in whichever ear itches, whenever it itches, but **no more than twice in one day**.

Using the drops in the long term:

- If you have been advised to continue using the drops in the long term it is better to dilute them – this will not affect their effectiveness.
- Dilute the Betnovate with equal parts of sterile/cooled boiled water (the same amount of water as Betnovate). Store the made-up solution in your refrigerator for up to one month. Discard the made up solution after a month; it might be helpful to write an expiry date on the bottle, to remind you when to throw it away. Please remember to warm the drops each time before you use them.

- **Do not use the diluted drops more than twice a day.**

Most chemists can supply you with a small 'dropper' style bottle. This will make putting the diluted ear drops in much easier.

How to put in your ear drops

1. Read the instructions on the bottle. Check on:
   - the number of drops required;
   - which ear(s) to put the drops in;
   - how many times a day (no more than twice).
2. If possible, ask someone else to put the drops in for you. Lie on a bed with the ear to be treated facing the ceiling. Warm the drops further by holding the bottle in your hand for a few minutes.
3. Take a firm hold of your ear; pull it gently backwards, then up and away from your head. This will make your ear canal straighter, so that the drops go in more easily. Put the prescribed amount of ear drops into your ear canal.
4. To make sure that all of your ear canal is coated with drops, gently pull your ear backwards and upwards, and then let go. You can also press rapidly on the small piece of cartilage towards the front of your ear (as if you were trying to block your ears).
5. Stay lying on the same side for at least 5 minutes. This gives the drops time to soak in.
6. Place a piece of cotton wool in the outer part of your ear canal, just to prevent any of the drops running out. Make sure you use enough cotton wool so that you can easily remove it. Remove the cotton wool after 10 minutes.
7. Sit up slowly.
8. If both ears need drops, wait for 10 minutes before treating the second ear, so that you don't lose the drops from the first ear when you lie on the other side.

What are the benefits of using Betnovate as ear drops?

We have found this treatment to be very effective for people who have suffered from frequent bouts of otitis externa (redness and swelling) caused by eczema, with associated itching. The treatment should reduce the amount of skin building up and reduce the itchiness.

What are the risks and side effects?

You may find that you experience a hot or burning sensation when you first use the drops – this is entirely normal and should be expected. You may also experience the following reactions:

- thinning of the skin inside your ear; this will return to normal after you stop the treatment;
- spreading or worsening of infected eczema, if it is not treated;
- contact dermatitis (skin inflammation) on your hands and the inside or outside of your ear;
- occasionally, colour changes to the skin near to where the drops have been applied.
- if you experience tinnitus (ringing or whistling in your ears), hearing loss or any other symptoms not mentioned in this leaflet, please stop using this medication and contact your ENT on the number at the end of this leaflet.

Please note that this medication is a licensed medication. However, this way of using it is unlicensed. It is still a perfectly safe and well-recognised way of using this medication and

should not cause any other problems than those detailed previously. If you have concerns about using it, please speak to your ENT doctor or nurse.

How to contact us

Greenlands Ward Tel: 0118 322 7172 or 0118 322 8101
Clinical Admin Team (CAT1) (Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm) Tel: 0118 322 7139 or email rbbh.CAT1@nhs.net
ENT Outpatient Department (Townlands) reception: 01865 903274

Based on a leaflet by Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT ENT Department, October 2026.
Next review due: October 2028.