

# PERMETHRIN

**Brand name** Lyclear

**Used in the following combined preparations** None

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Permethrin is an insecticide used to treat pubic lice (but not head lice) and scabies infestations. The drug works by interfering with the nervous system of the parasites, causing paralysis and death. Permethrin is less toxic to humans than some of the other types of insecticide, although it is toxic to some animals, such as cats.

Permethrin is applied topically as a cream to treat pubic lice and scabies infestations. It should not be used on broken or infested skin. In children and elderly people, the entire body surface, including the face, scalp, neck, and ears, may have to be covered; adults are treated from the neck downwards.

For pubic lice, the entire body should be treated and the permethrin left on overnight. A second treatment seven days later is needed. For both pubic lice and scabies, all family members should be treated at the same time, to prevent recontamination, and the process repeated after a week.

There are signs that the parasites are developing resistance to permethrin. If the drug does not work for you, your pharmacist should be able to suggest an alternative treatment (e.g. malathion).

Permethrin is also an ingredient of some insect repellents used to impregnate clothing and mosquito nets in malarial regions.

## QUICK REFERENCE

**Drug group** Drug to treat skin parasites (p.136)

**Overdose danger rating** Low

**Dependence rating** Low

**Prescription needed** No

**Available as generic** Yes

## INFORMATION FOR USERS

**Follow instructions on the label. Call your doctor if symptoms worsen.**

### How taken/used



Cream.

### Frequency and timing of doses

Once only, repeating after 7 days (2 years and over); under specialist supervision only (infants and children under 2 years). Avoid contact with eyes and broken or infected skin.

### Dosage range

As directed.

### Onset of effect

*Pubic lice* Wash off after 12–24 hours.

*Scabies* Wash off after 8–12 hours.

### Duration of action

Until washed off.

### Diet advice

None.

### Storage

Keep in original container at room temperature out of the reach of children. Protect from light.

### Missed dose

Timing of the second application is not rigid; use as soon as you remember.

### Stopping the drug

Not applicable.

### Exceeding the dose

An occasional extra application is unlikely to cause problems. If the drug is accidentally swallowed, take emergency action.

## SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS

**Be sure to tell your doctor if:**

- You are taking other medicines.



### Pregnancy

Safety not established. Discuss with your doctor.



### Breast-feeding

Safety not established. Discuss with your doctor.



### Infants and children

Under specialist supervision only under 2 years. No special problems in older children.



### Over 60

No special problems, but consult your doctor or a health professional.



### Driving and hazardous work

No special problems.



### Alcohol

No special problems.

## POSSIBLE ADVERSE EFFECTS

In general, permethrin is well tolerated on the skin, although mild skin irritation is common.

Symptom/effect	Frequency		Discuss with doctor		Stop taking drug now	Call doctor now
	Common	Rare	Only if severe	In all cases		
Itching	●		●			
Reddened skin/stinging	●		●			
Rash		●	●			

## INTERACTIONS

**Corticosteroids** Treatment of eczema-like reactions to permethrin with these drugs

may lower the immune response to the mites and should not be given.

## PROLONGED USE

Permethrin should not be used topically for prolonged periods; it is intended for intermittent use only. Prolonged use of permethrin to impregnate clothing and netting is not known to cause serious toxic effects.