

PROTOPIC (TACROLIMUS)

Protopic is a new topical medication used to treat eczema or dermatitis. There is one common form of eczema called atopic dermatitis for which this product was initially developed.

Most treatments for eczema involve using a topical steroid cream or ointment applied to the affected areas of the skin. Protopic is different because it is not a steroid-containing product and, therefore, will not cause any of the side effects of topical steroids. For this reason, it has some advantages over the prior treatment for dermatitis.

Protopic is a new type of medication called an immunomodulator. It works by adjusting the immune imbalance that occurs in many forms of dermatitis. It works directly on the skin to treat the redness, swelling, and itching that occurs in eczema.

Protopic is used only on the surface of the skin. It should never be ingested. It is simple to use and has a similar consistency to plain Vaseline. Apply a thin layer to the affected areas on the skin twice per day. One of the better times to use the medication is after a shower or a bath. In general, as the condition improves you can decrease the frequency of application. That is, the product is used twice per day in the beginning; it can be cut down to once per day, then every other day, and then stopped completely.

In most cases, patients notice an improvement within days or weeks. It is always beneficial to cut down the frequency of application as the condition improves.

Protopic has very few side effects. The most common is some slight stinging or burning, as the medication is first applied. This normally improves as the skin gets back to normal. The burning is normally related to how open the eczema is to begin with. One other restriction with Protopic is to try to avoid excess sun exposure or tanning bed exposure while using this medication.

As I noted above, Protopic is a very helpful medication for various forms of skin conditions. If you have any other questions regarding this, please let me know before you leave the office.