

Description

Austral-Balm is a topical liniment which contains wintergreen oil 246mg/g, emu oil 10mg/g, peppermint oil 50mg/g, melaleuca oil 10mg, eucalyptus oil 220mg/g and lemon oil 20mg/g.

Indications

Austral-Balm's TGA approved indications are for the temporary relief of arthritic or rheumatic pain and for the relief of muscular aches, pains, cramps and spasms, and for relief of sciatic pain.

Pharmacology and Studies

Wintergreen oil contains over 99% methyl salicylate which, following transdermal absorption, is converted to the active compound salicylic acid¹. This is the same active compound produced by aspirin, and which mediates aspirin's analgesic and anti-inflammatory properties. To maximise transdermal absorption of methyl salicylate, cineol in the form of eucalyptus oil is utilised. Recent evidence² also indicates that emu oil may function as a transdermal absorption enhancer.

Recent animal studies³ indicate potent anti-inflammatory activity of emu oil, with some oil preparations comparable with ibuprofen and others comparable with prednisolone for anti-inflammatory potency in adjuvant induced polyarthritis and carrageenan induced oedema models respectively. Other recent animal studies⁴ indicate that some emu oil preparations are more potent than naproxen in anti-inflammatory activity.

Extensive reporting on the therapeutics of emu oil in humans has resulted in the Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) approving emu oil for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis symptoms.

The active compound(s) in emu oil is unknown, but appears to be present at a concentration of less than 5mg/g and may be a C18 to C20 partially unsaturated fatty acid.

Emu oil also contains an unusual triglyceride formed by oleic and palmitic acids which may partly explain its unusual physical properties.

Eucalyptus and peppermint oils both produce increased micro-circulation⁵ and a feeling of warmth which may produce a subjective improvement for the patient.

Dosage and Administration

Austral-Balm may be applied 2 to 3 times daily. The bottle is held upside down over the affected area and the required number of drops dispensed. The liniment is then gently massaged in. The required number of drops vary according to the area to be treated. The following dosage guide for specific areas is recommended.

Wrist	4 drops	Ankle	5 drops	Elbow	5 drops
Knee	7 drops	Neck	8 drops	Shoulders	10 drops
Upper Leg	10 drops	Upper Arm	8 drops	Back	12 drops
Lower Leg	8 drops	Lower Arm	6 drops		

For Children 6 to 12 years use approximately half of the above dosages. For children 2 to 6 years use approximately a quarter of the above dosages. Austral-Balm is not recommended in children under 2 years without medical advice, on the basis that salicylates are generally avoided in young children.

The maximum recommended adult dosage is 100 drops per application and 200 drops per day.

Precautions

Salicylate is readily absorbed from Austral-Balm and if applied in vary large amounts and/or very frequently may result in salicylate toxicity.



Like all systemically available salicylates, Austral-Balm may affect platelet function. In preoperative patients, patients receiving anti-coagulants or chemotherapy, or other haematologically compromised patients, the risk of haemorrhage should be considered.

Austral-Balm, like other salicylate preparations, may rarely precipitate asthma in some sensitive individuals.

Avoid contact with eyes and mucous membranes, use on intact skin only.

Overdosage

If toxicity from topical use occurs, treat as for salicylate poisoning. If ingested, do not induce vomiting but treat as for methylsalicylate ingestion. Austral-Balm also contains ethanol 20% w/w.

Interactions

Austral-Balm may potentiate the hypoprothrombinaemic effect of warfarin.

Adverse Effects

Austral-Balm is generally well tolerated. Occasionally some local irritation may occur where Austral-Balm is applied. Warmed skin is more prone to irritation so it is recommended not to apply Austral-Balm during exercise. Rarely a local rash may occur, if so discontinue use.

Use in Pregnancy

Like other salicylates, the methylsalicylate of Austral-Balm may potentially cause premature closure of the fetal ductus arteriosus if applied in late pregnancy. This would require substantial systemic absorption from the application site. Due to this risk, Austral-Balm is not recommended in the third trimester of pregnancy.

Use in Lactation

As salicylates may be excreted in breast milk in small amounts, Austral-Balm should be avoided in nursing mothers, especially in high doses.

Use in Sport

Austral-Balm is compliant with the Australian Sports Drug Agency and the International Olympic Commission (IOC) requirements and may be used freely in sporting competitions.

Pack

25ml/0.85 US fl.oz Dropper Bottle

Storage

Store below 25°C/77°F. Keep out of reach of children.

Availability

Non-prescription

Aust L 71226



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¹ W. Bowman, M. Rand, Textbook of Pharmacology, 16.19

² J. Snowden, P. O'Malley, T. Ellis, Emu Oil Its Anti-Inflammatory Properties Oct 1999, RIRDC Publication No 99/133

³ J. Snowden, P. O'Malley, T. Ellis, Emu Oil Its Anti-Inflammatory Properties Oct 1999, RIRDC Publication No 99/133

⁴ M.Whitehouse, A. Turner, C. Davis and M. Roberts, Emu Oil(s): A Source of Non-toxic Transdermal Anti-inflammatory Agents in Aboriginal Medicine, Inflammopharmacology 1998; 6: 1-8

⁵ A. Peirce, American Pharmaceutical Association, Practical Guide to Natural Medicines: 500

