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Myrrh

Commiphora molmol Engler, gummi-resina

This is a summary of the scientific conclusions reached by the Committee on Herbal Medicinal Products (HMPC) on the medicinal uses of myrrh. The HMPC conclusions are taken into account by EU Member States when evaluating applications for the licensing of herbal medicines containing myrrh.

This summary is not intended to provide practical advice on how to use medicines containing myrrh. For practical information about using myrrh medicines, patients should read the package leaflet that comes with the medicine or contact their doctor or pharmacist.

What is myrrh?

Myrrh is the common name for the resin of the plant *Commiphora molmol* Engler.

The HMPC conclusions only cover myrrh preparations that are obtained by putting the plant material in a solvent (such as ethanol) to dissolve compounds and form a liquid extract.

Herbal medicines containing this myrrh preparation are usually available in liquid forms to be applied to the skin or the lining of the mouth.

Myrrh preparations may also be found in combination with other herbal substances in some herbal medicines. These combinations are not covered in this summary.

What are the HMPC conclusions on its medicinal uses?

The HMPC concluded that, on the basis of its long-standing use, this myrrh preparation can be used for treatment of minor ulcers (sores) and inflammation in the mouth or for treatment of minor wounds and small boils.

Myrrh medicines should only be used in adults and adolescents over the age of 12 years. If symptoms last more than 1 week or worsen while taking the medicine, a doctor or a qualified health care practitioner should be consulted. Detailed instructions on how to take myrrh medicines and who can use them can be found in the package leaflet that comes with the medicine.

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What evidence supports the use of myrrh medicines?

The HMPC conclusions on the use of these myrrh medicines for treatment of mouth ulcers and inflammation or minor wounds and boils are based on their 'traditional use'. This means that, although there is insufficient evidence from clinical trials, the effectiveness of these herbal medicines is plausible and there is evidence that they have been used safely in this way for at least 30 years (including at least 15 years within the EU). Moreover, the intended use does not require medical supervision.

In its assessment, the HMPC considered laboratory studies which showed myrrh preparations to have antibacterial, local anaesthetic and anti-inflammatory effects.

For detailed information on the studies assessed by the HMPC, see the HMPC assessment report.

What are the risks associated with myrrh medicines?

Allergic skin reactions have been reported with myrrh medicines. The frequency is not known.

The liquid extract contains alcohol, which may cause short-lived pain and irritation on application to the skin or lining of the mouth.

Further information on the risks associated with these myrrh medicines, including the appropriate precautions for their safe use, can be found in the monograph, which are published on the Agency's website under the section 'Documents': ema.europa.eu/medicines/herbal/myrrha-gummi-resina.

How are myrrh medicines approved in the EU?

Any applications for the licensing of medicines containing myrrh have to be submitted to the national authorities responsible for medicinal products, which will assess the application for the herbal medicine and take into account the scientific conclusions of the HMPC.

Information on the use and licensing of myrrh medicines in EU Member States should be obtained from the relevant national authorities.

Other information about myrrh medicines

Further information on the HMPC assessment of myrrh medicines, including details of the Committee's conclusions, can be found under the section 'Documents' on the Agency's website: ema.europa.eu/medicines/herbal/myrrha-gummi-resina. For more information about treatment with myrrh medicines, read the package leaflet that comes with the medicine or contact your doctor or pharmacist.