



EUROPEAN MEDICINES AGENCY
SCIENCE MEDICINES HEALTH

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Herbal medicine: summary for the public

Purple coneflower root

Echinacea purpurea (L.) Moench, radix

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

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

What is purple coneflower root?

Purple coneflower root is the common name for the root of the plant *Echinacea purpurea* (L.) Moench.

The HMPC conclusions only cover purple coneflower root preparations which are obtained by putting the plant material in a solvent (such as ethanol or water) to dissolve compounds and form a liquid extract. The solvent is then evaporated to obtain a dry extract.

Herbal medicines containing these purple coneflower root preparations are usually available in solid forms to be taken by mouth or to be applied to the lining of the mouth.

Purple coneflower root 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, purple coneflower root preparations can be used for relief of common cold symptoms or for relief of spots and pimples due to mild acne.

Purple coneflower root medicines should only be used in adults and adolescents over the age of 12 years. If symptoms last longer than 10 days or worsen when taking the medicine for a cold, or for longer than 2 weeks or worsen when taking the medicine for mild acne, a doctor or a qualified healthcare practitioner should be consulted. Detailed instructions on how to take purple coneflower



root medicines and who can use them can be found in the package leaflet that comes with the medicine.

What evidence supports the use of purple coneflower root medicines?

The HMPC conclusions on the use of these purple coneflower root medicines in common cold symptoms or mild acne 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 also considered clinical studies conducted on the use of purple coneflower root medicines on the common cold. However, firm conclusions could not be drawn as the results were not consistent. No studies have been conducted on the use of purple coneflower root medicines on acne. Therefore, the HMPC conclusions on the uses of these purple coneflower root medicines are based on their long-standing use.

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

What are the risks associated with purple coneflower root medicines?

Hypersensitivity (allergic) reactions including skin reactions may occur with purple coneflower root medicines. Their frequency is unknown.

Patients who are hypersensitive to purple coneflower and to other plants of the Asteraceae (Compositae) family must not take purple coneflower root medicines.

Further information on the risks associated with these purple coneflower root medicines, including the appropriate precautions for their safe use, can be found in the monograph under the tab 'All documents' on the Agency's website: ema.europa.eu/Find_medicine/Herbal_medicines_for_human_use.

How are purple coneflower root medicines approved in the EU?

Any applications for the licensing of medicines containing purple coneflower root 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 purple coneflower root medicines in EU Member States should be obtained from the relevant national authorities.

Other information about purple coneflower root medicines

Further information on the HMPC assessment of purple coneflower root medicines, including details of the Committee's conclusions, can be found under the tab 'All documents' on the Agency's website: ema.europa.eu/Find_medicine/Herbal_medicines_for_human_use. For more information about treatment with purple coneflower root medicines, read the package leaflet that comes with the medicine or contact your doctor or pharmacist.