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Tormentil

Potentilla erecta (L.) Raeusch., rhizoma

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

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

What is tormentil?

Tormentil is the common name for the rhizome (underground stem) of the plant *Potentilla erecta* (L.) Raeusch.

The HMPC conclusions only cover tormentil preparations that are obtained by drying and comminuting (reducing into tiny pieces) the rhizome; by putting the plant material in a solvent (such as ethanol) to dissolve compounds and form a liquid extract; and by evaporating the solvent in a liquid extract to obtain a dry extract.

Herbal medicines containing these tormentil preparations are usually available as herbal tea to be drunk and in liquid forms to be applied to the lining of the mouth or taken by mouth.

Tormentil 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, these tormentil preparations can be used for treatment of mild diarrhoea and the herbal tea and some liquid preparations for minor inflammation of the lining of the mouth.

Tormentil medicines should only be used in adults. If diarrhoea worsens or continues for longer than 3 days or mouth inflammation worsens or continues for longer than 1 week while the patient is taking the medicine, a doctor or a qualified health care practitioner should be consulted. Detailed instructions on how to take tormentil 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 tormentil medicines?

The HMPC conclusions on the use of these tormentil medicines for diarrhoea and mouth inflammation 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 from the published literature reporting astringent effects, which reduce the absorption of fluids into the intestines, and anti-inflammatory effects of tannins which are a main constituent of tormentil medicines.

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

What are the risks associated with tormentil medicines?

Mild gut complaints such as nausea and vomiting have been reported with tormentil medicines when taken to treat diarrhoea. The frequency of these side effects is not known.

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

How are tormentil medicines approved in the EU?

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

Other information about tormentil medicines

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