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Yarrow flower

Achillea millefolium L., flos

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

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

What is yarrow flower?

Yarrow flower is the common name for the flowers of the plant *Achillea millefolium* L.

The HMPC conclusions only cover yarrow flower preparations that are obtained by drying and comminuting (reducing into tiny pieces) the flowers or by putting the plant material in a solvent (such as ethanol) to dissolve compounds and form a liquid extract.

Herbal medicines containing these yarrow flower preparations are usually available as herbal tea to be drunk, as infusion to be applied to the skin or in liquid forms to be taken by mouth.

Yarrow flower 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 yarrow flower preparations can be used for temporary loss of appetite; mild gut complaints, including bloating and flatulence; small superficial wounds; and minor spasm associated with menstrual periods.

Yarrow flower medicines should only be used in adults and adolescents over the age of 12 years. If loss of appetite or gut complaints worsen or continue longer than 2 weeks or wounds and menstrual spasm worsen or continue 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 yarrow flower medicines and who can use them can be found in the package leaflet that comes with the medicine.



What evidence supports the use of yarrow flower medicines?

The HMPC conclusions on the use of these yarrow flower medicines for loss of appetite, gut complaints, wounds and menstrual spasm 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 antibacterial and anti-inflammatory effects of yarrow flower medicines. No clinical studies with yarrow flower medicines are available.

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

What are the risks associated with yarrow flower medicines?

Hypersensitivity (allergic) reactions of the skin have been reported with yarrow flower medicines. The frequency of these reactions is not known.

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

Further information on the risks associated with these yarrow flower 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/millefolii-flos.

How are yarrow flower medicines approved in the EU?

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

Other information about yarrow flower medicines

Further information on the HMPC assessment of yarrow flower 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/millefolii-flos. For more information about treatment with yarrow flower medicines, read the package leaflet that comes with the medicine or contact your doctor or pharmacist.