



SASKATCHEWAN DRUG INFORMATION SERVICE

College of Pharmacy and Nutrition • University of Saskatchewan
110 Science Place • Saskatoon SK • S7N 5C9 • www.usask.ca/druginfo

How often can oral antivirals be prescribed for cold sores?

- If symptoms are mild, OTC topical treatment is preferred to prescription antivirals for recurrent cold sores.
- If cold sore has already appeared (regardless of severity), oral antivirals are not effective – recommend OTC topical treatment.
- If an antiviral has previously been prescribed, ensure that the cold sore has completely healed between episodes before issuing another prescription. Typically a cold sore will resolve within 14 days. Patients should be referred to their doctor if the lesion does not heal within 3 weeks.
- Refer patients with > 6 episodes yearly to their doctor. They might benefit from daily suppressive therapy with oral antivirals.
- For more information, consult the Guidelines on the Saskatchewan Drug Information Service (SDIS) website at www.druginfo.usask.ca or call the SDIS information line at 966-6340 (Saskatoon) or 1-800-667-3425.

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