

**EMLA Cream**

**About EMLA Cream**

EMLA cream is placed on skin for pain relief. It is used to numb an area before placing an IV, drawing blood, or giving injections. EMLA is not used for heel sticks.

**When to Use**

Apply at least 1 hour before a needle stick and longer before painful procedures. The cream begins to numb the site within 15 minutes. It will take **at least** 60 minutes to provide pain relief. The greatest pain relief is seen 2-3 hours after applying. A covering helps keep the cream in place but is not required.

The cream is removed before any procedure. The numbness or pain relief will last for 1-2 hours after removing.

**How to Apply**

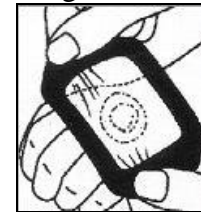
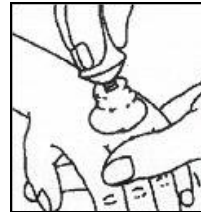
EMLA should be applied to normal skin. Do not apply to open areas or irritated skin. For young children, it is best to have two people help. One person holds the child; one applies the cream. Infants and small children need less cream. Do not use on a child under 1 month of age.

Be careful not to get the cream on your hands. If you do, wash them right away to be sure that your hands don't become numb. Do not apply near the eyes or open wounds.

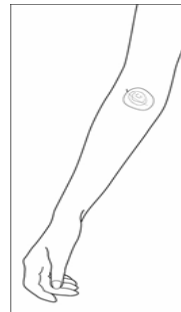
**Before a Blood Draw or IV Placement**

Look for large blue veins on the backs of the hands and inside of the elbows. Cover the largest blue veins with a large drop of cream.

**IV placement:** Apply cream to the backs of both hands and the inside of both elbows. Cover with a clear dressing as shown below.



**Drawing blood:** Apply cream to the inside of both elbows. Cover with a clear dressing.



**Before Injections Into Skin or Muscle**

Cover the injection site with a large drop of cream. Spread a thick layer over the skin surface. Do not rub it in. Apply a clear dressing over the EMLA cream. Smooth down the dressing edges to avoid leakage.

If you do not like the clear dressings or are sensitive to them, smooth a piece of plastic wrap over the cream and secure it in place with first-aid tape. Be sure to tape it down well to avoid leakage.

**After Applying EMLA Cream**

Some people notice their skin beneath the EMLA cream is a pale or red. This is normal. This may last for 1-2 hours. If you/your child develops a rash, swelling or itching at the site, remove the dressing and wipe off the cream. Wash all the sites with soap and water.

**Storage**

Store EMLA cream with other medicines.  
Keep out of reach of children.

If you have questions about EMLA, talk  
with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

If you are a patient receiving care at UnityPoint – Meriter, Swedish American or a health system outside of UW Health, please use the phone numbers provided in your discharge instructions for any questions or concerns.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 7/2020 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#5706.