



EUROPEAN MEDICINES AGENCY  
SCIENCE MEDICINES HEALTH

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## Herbal medicine: summary for the public

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### Purple coneflower herb

*Echinacea Purpurea* (L.) Moench., herba recens

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

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

#### **What is purple coneflower herb?**

Purple coneflower herb is the common name for the flowering aerial parts of the plant *Echinacea purpurea* (L.) Moench. The flowering aerial parts for medicinal uses are obtained from plants that have been cultivated or found in the wild. Purple coneflower herb preparations are made by expressing the juice of the fresh herb. The expressed juice may then be dried.

Herbal medicines containing purple coneflower herb preparations are usually available in liquid or solid forms to be taken by mouth and in semi-solid (such as ointments) or liquid forms to be applied to the skin.

#### **What are the HMPC conclusions on its medicinal uses?**

The HMPC concluded that purple coneflower herb medicines to be taken by mouth can be used short term for the prevention and treatment of common colds.

The HMPC also concluded that, on the basis of their long-standing use, purple coneflower herb medicines to be applied to the skin can be used to treat small superficial wounds.

Purple coneflower herb medicines should only be used in adults and adolescents above the age of 12 years. A doctor or pharmacist should be consulted if symptoms persist for more than 10 days when using purple coneflower herb medicines for the treatment of common colds. For the treatment of superficial wounds, a doctor or a qualified healthcare practitioner should be consulted if symptoms



persist for more than one week. Detailed instructions on how to take purple coneflower herb medicines and who can use them can be found in the package leaflets that come with the medicines.

## **What evidence supports the use of purple coneflower herb medicines?**

The HMPC conclusions on the short-term use of purple coneflower herb medicines to prevent and treat common cold are based on their 'well-established use' in this indication. This means that there are bibliographic data providing scientific evidence of their effectiveness and safety when used in this way, covering a period of at least 10 years in the EU.

In its assessment, the HMPC considered a number of clinical studies comparing purple coneflower herb medicines with placebo for short-term prevention and treatment of upper airways infections. The most relevant clinical trials performed in adults indicated that purple coneflower herb medicines containing the expressed juice to be taken by mouth can prevent and improve the symptoms of cold more rapidly than placebo when taken early.

The HMPC conclusions on the use of purple coneflower herb medicines for superficial wounds 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.

The HMPC noted possible beneficial effects on wound healing in animal studies. However, these data were insufficient to be used as evidence of effectiveness and the HMPC conclusions for this indication are based on the medicines' long-standing use.

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

## **What are the risks associated with purple coneflower herb medicines?**

Allergic reactions such as rash have been reported with the use of purple coneflower herb medicines. When used for prevention and treatment of common cold, cases of serious allergic reactions (such as Stevens-Johnson syndrome, asthma and anaphylactic shock) have been reported, especially in patients who are atopic (have a predisposition to allergic reactions). Their frequency is unknown.

Purple coneflower herb medicines must not be used in patients who are hypersensitive (allergic) to purple coneflower or other plants of the Asteraceae (Compositae) family.

Further information on the risks associated with purple coneflower herb 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](http://ema.europa.eu/Find%20medicine/Herbal%20medicines%20for%20human%20use).

## **How are purple coneflower herb medicines approved in the EU?**

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

## **Other information about purple coneflower herb medicines**

Further information on the HMPC assessment of purple coneflower herb 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](http://ema.europa.eu/Find%20medicine/Herbal%20medicines%20for%20human%20use). For more information about treatment with purple coneflower herb medicines, read the package leaflet that comes with the medicine or contact your doctor or pharmacist.