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Shepherd's purse

Capsella bursa-pastoris (L.) Medikus, herba

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

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

What is shepherd's purse?

Shepherd's purse is the common name for the aerial parts of the plant *Capsella bursa-pastoris* (L.) Medikus.

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

Herbal medicines containing these shepherd's purse preparations are usually available as herbal tea to be drunk or in liquid forms to be taken by mouth.

Shepherd's purse 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 shepherd's purse preparations can be used to reduce heavy menstrual bleeding in women with regular menstrual cycles, after serious conditions have been excluded by a medical doctor.

Shepherd's purse medicines should only be used in adult women. If symptoms continue or worsen while taking the medicine, a doctor or a qualified health care practitioner should be consulted. Detailed instructions on how to take shepherd's purse medicines and who can use them can be found in the package leaflet that comes with the medicine.



What evidence supports the use of shepherd's purse medicines?

The HMPC conclusions on the use of these shepherd's purse medicines for reduction of heavy menstrual bleeding 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 noted a study in women with heavy menstrual bleeding which compared treatment with shepherd's purse and pain relief to no treatment, however, no firm conclusions could be made due to a lack of information on the nature of the shepherd's purse liquid extract.

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

What are the risks associated with shepherd's purse medicines?

At the time of the HMPC assessment, no side effects had been reported with these medicines.

Further information on the risks associated with these shepherd's purse 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/bursae-pastoris-herba.

How are shepherd's purse medicines approved in the EU?

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

Other information about shepherd's purse medicines

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