Yarrow herb
*Achillea millefolium* L., *herba*

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

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

**What is yarrow herb?**

Yarrow herb is the common name for the above-ground parts of the plant *Achillea millefolium* L., *herba*.

The HMPC conclusions only cover yarrow herb preparations that are obtained by drying and comminuting (reducing to tiny pieces) the above-ground parts of the plant, by expressing the juice of the herb or by putting the plant material in a solvent (such as ethanol or water) to dissolve compounds and form a liquid extract or a dry extract where the solvent is partially evaporated.

Herbal medicines containing these yarrow herb preparations are usually available as herbal tea to be drunk, as solid and liquid forms to be taken by mouth or as an infusion to be applied on the skin using a dressing.

Yarrow herb 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 their long-standing use, these yarrow herb preparations can be used for temporary loss of appetite and mild digestive problems including bloating and flatulence. They can also be used for minor abdominal cramps associated with menstrual periods and for the treatment of small superficial wounds.

Yarrow herb medicines should only be used in adults and adolescents over the age of 12 years. If symptoms persist after two weeks of treatment for loss of appetite and mild digestive problems
including bloating and flatulence and after one week of treatment cramps during menstrual periods and superficial wounds, a doctor or a qualified health care practitioner should be consulted.

Detailed instructions on how to take yarrow herb 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 herb medicines?**

The HMPC conclusions on the use of these yarrow herb medicines for loss of appetite, mild digestive problems, superficial 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, spasmolytic (spasm reducing) and anti-inflammatory effects of yarrow herb medicines.

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

**What are the risks associated with yarrow herb medicines?**

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

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

Further information on the risks associated with these yarrow herb 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’:

**How are yarrow herb medicines approved in the EU?**

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

**Other information about yarrow herb medicines**

Further information on the HMPC assessment of yarrow herb medicines, including details of the Committee’s conclusions, can be found in the section ‘Documents’ on the Agency’s website: https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/medicines/herbal/millefolii-herba. For more information about treatment with yarrow herb medicines, read the package leaflet that comes with the medicine or contact your doctor or pharmacist.