

## Anesthetic cream (EMLA<sup>®</sup>, LMX4<sup>®</sup>)

### How does this medicine work?

Anesthetic cream is a numbing medicine that can ease a needle procedure such as a blood draw, IV start, or spinal tap. The cream is applied to the skin before the procedure. It is held in place with Tegaderm<sup>®</sup> (a clear bandage), foam tape, or plastic wrap for large areas. It should not be disturbed for 60 to 90 minutes, depending on the brand of cream used. A health care provider will remove it before the procedure.

Anesthetic cream is optional. It is fine for most children, **except for**:

- babies younger than 1 month
- any child who has had an allergic reaction to “amide-type” anesthetics such as Novocain<sup>®</sup>

Please also note: The cream can cause blood vessels to constrict, making them harder to find. This could slightly prolong the needle procedure itself.

If you decide to use the cream for blood drawing, we will make every attempt to apply it before every blood draw, unless you let us know otherwise. You can change your mind anytime.

In some cases, you can apply the cream at home yourself.

### How do I prepare my child?

Explain how the cream will be put on, and that it will be covered up while it works. Just before the needle procedure, when the covering is removed, it may feel like a big Band-Aid<sup>®</sup> being taken off. Explain that the cream will make the needle procedure more comfortable, but the child might still feel something, such as pressure.

Encourage your child to do these “jobs”:

- protect the site so the cream can work best
- practice holding still for the procedure
- choose a “distraction” activity to focus on during the procedure, such as:
  - blow bubbles, or blow on a feather
  - look at a picture or book
  - talk about a favorite place or activity
  - listen to music
  - you and your child may have other ideas

### How should I apply the cream?

Anesthetic cream comes in a 5-gram or 30-gram tube. It must be on the skin **for the recommended time** in order to work.

Apply it **only** to the sites chosen by a health care provider (see last page). The cream should not be used on eyes or inside mouth or ears. If you have questions about the sites please call:

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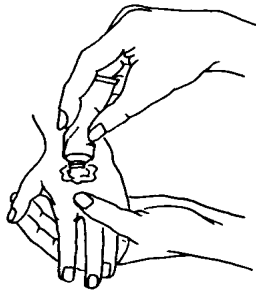
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Wash and dry the sites well before applying. Do not apply to a site that has an open wound such as a cut or scratch.

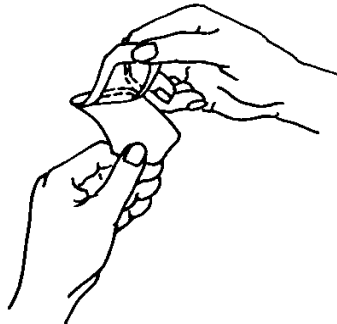
Follow these steps. (As an example, these pictures show application to a hand.)

1. Use the point on the top of the cap to break the seal inside the tube.
2. Apply the correct amount of cream to each site:
  - dime-sized spot  
if child weighs **less than 22 pounds**  
(less than 10 kg)
  - quarter-sized spot  
if child weighs **22 pounds or more**  
(10 kg or more)

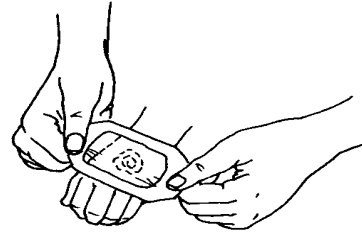
**Do not apply more than instructed.**



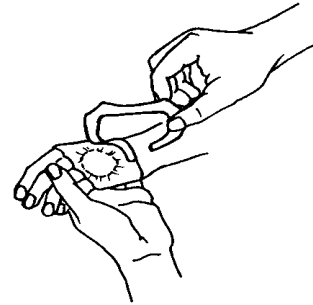
3. Remove the center cut-out piece from the Tegaderm. Leave the paper frame on.
4. Peel the paper liner off.



5. Cover the cream, holding onto the Tegaderm frame. Be careful not to press down on the center. The cream must not be spread out.



6. Smooth down the edges of the Tegaderm carefully to avoid leaking.
7. Remove the frame.



8. Repeat for the second site.
9. Write down the time the cream was applied. Do not allow your child to touch the Tegaderm. Handling it will cause the blob to spread out, and make it less likely to work well.
10. If cream oozes out from under the covering, wipe off with a cloth. **Avoid** contact with the mouth or eyes. **Do not** allow the child to chew or suck on the covering.
11. The areas will be numb for up to 4 hours after the cream is removed. Keep protecting these areas from injury, such as scratching or bumping, and extreme heat or cold.

## What are the side effects?

Used as directed, anesthetic cream has few side effects.

Expected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• blanching (whitening) of the skin</li><li>• tightening of blood vessels</li></ul>
Rare	<p>If too much cream is used, these can result:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• nervousness</li><li>• dizziness, lightheadedness</li><li>• confusion</li><li>• tremors</li><li>• slow breathing</li><li>• methemoglobinemia (lower blood oxygen capacity)</li></ul>

## When should I call the clinic?

- if you need a prescription for the cream
- questions about the sites (such as a scrape or cut at the site)
- any of the rare side effects above
- signs of allergic reaction:
  - fever or chills
  - rash or hives
  - wheezing
  - shortness of breath: **call 911**

## What else do I need to know?

Not all insurance companies cover anesthetic cream. If you are applying the cream at home, please check with your insurer about coverage. LMX4 (lidocaine 4%) cream is available over the counter and does not require a prescription. EMLA is available only with a prescription.

For price information, please call your pharmacy.

Check the label and expiration date before giving each dose. Ask your pharmacist what to do with outdated or unused medicines. If there is no “take-back” program empty them into the trash.

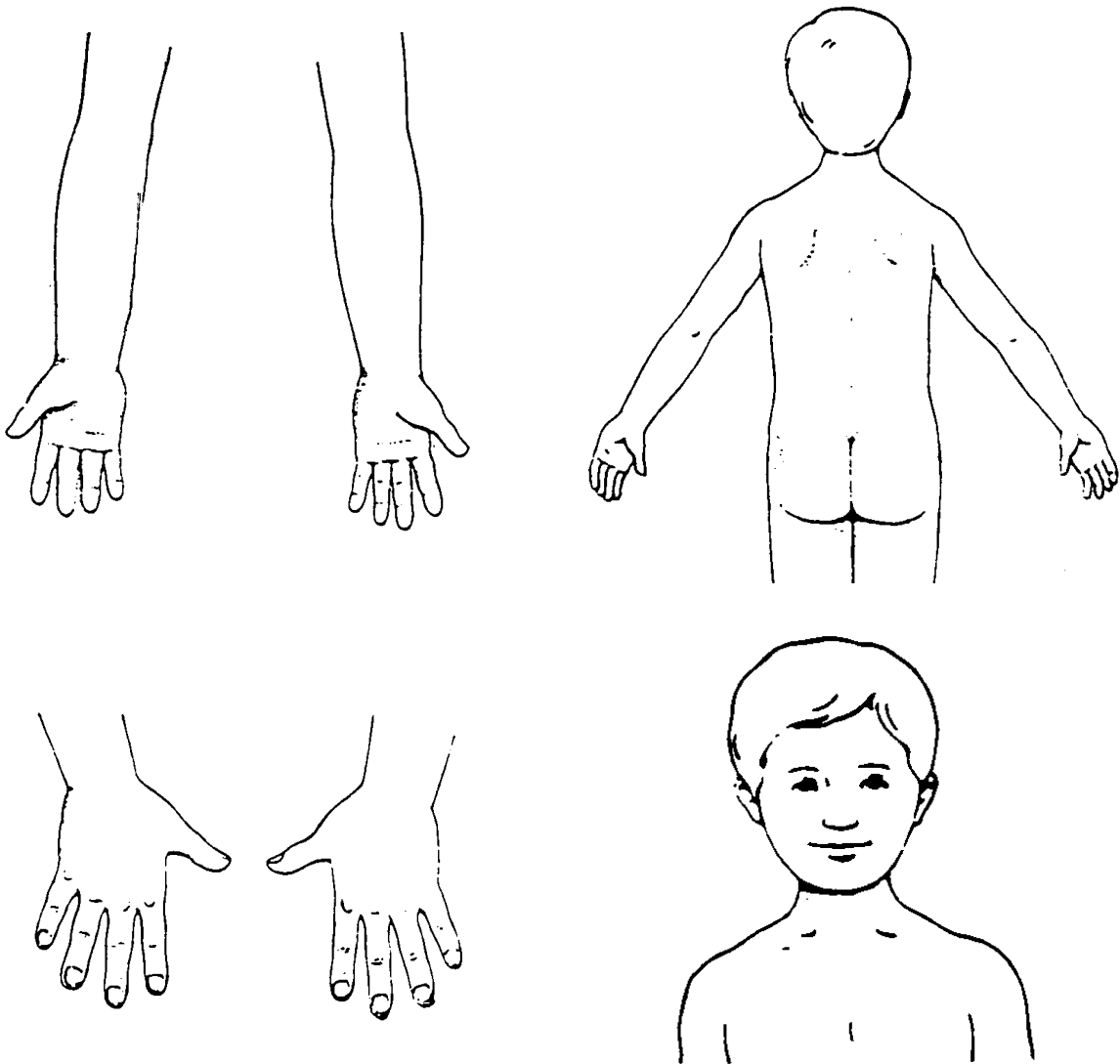
Store all medicines, including any leftover cream, in their original containers, tightly capped, and away from direct sunlight or heat. Do not store in humid places such as the bathroom. Keep them out of children’s reach, locked up if possible.

If too much or the wrong kind of medicine is taken, call the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222.

## Questions?

This sheet is not specific to your child but provides general information. If you have any questions, please call the doctor or pharmacist. If your child needs support during the procedure, please call the Child Life department.

## Where to apply anesthetic cream



### Other instructions:

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