

Drug (brand examples)	Strength	Preparations
Mild corticosteroids [NB1] [NB2]		
desonide (Desowen)	0.05%	lotion
hydrocortisone (DermAid)	0.5%, 1%	cream, ointment, topical liquid, spray
hydrocortisone acetate (Cortic-DS, HydroCortic, Hysoderm, Sigmacort)		
Moderate corticosteroids [NB1] [NB2]		
betamethasone valerate (Antroquoril, Betnovate 1/5, Celestone-M, Cortival 1/5)	0.02%	cream
betamethasone valerate (Betnovate 1/2, Cortival 1/2)	0.05%	cream, ointment
clobetasone butyrate (Eumovate, Kloxema)	0.05%	cream
triamcinolone acetonide (Aristocort, Tricortone)	0.02%	cream, ointment
Potent corticosteroids [NB1] [NB2]		
betamethasone dipropionate (Diprosone, Eleuphrat)	0.05%	cream, ointment, lotion
betamethasone valerate (Betnovate)	0.1%	cream, ointment
methylprednisolone aceponate (Advantan) [NB1]	0.1%	cream, ointment, fatty ointment, lotion
mometasone furoate (Elocon, Momasone, Novasone, Zatamil)	0.1%	cream, ointment, hydrogel, lotion
Very potent corticosteroids [NB1] [NB2]		
betamethasone dipropionate (Diprosone OV)	0.05% in optimised vehicle	ointment in optimised vehicle
clobetasol propionate (Clobex)	0.05%	cream, ointment, lotion, shampoo [NB3]

OV = optimised vehicle

NB1: Potency classification for each drug is primarily based on the results of vasoconstrictor studies. Potency classifications based on vasoconstrictor effect typically correlate with therapeutic potency; however, many other factors determine therapeutic potency in a patient (eg area of application, frequency and duration of treatment). Potency classifications of topical corticosteroids may differ depending on the guideline or resource consulted; for example, although methylprednisolone aceponate is classed as ‘moderate’ in some references, it is the consensus of the Dermatology Expert Group that methylprednisolone aceponate is more potent than other topical corticosteroids listed in the ‘moderate’ category.

NB2: Formulation of a drug can affect potency; a topical drug prepared as a cream is less potent than the same drug prepared as an ointment.

NB3: A commercial product is available for clobetasol propionate as a shampoo. Clobetasol propionate as a cream, ointment or lotion is not registered for use in Australia, but is available through the Special Access Scheme (for certain indications) or from compounding pharmacies; only use these under specialist supervision.