

## Patient Fact Sheet

# CALENDULA

**CALENDULA** is a type of marigold. Its Latin name is *Calendula officinalis*. The herbal medicine comes from the flowers. It is available as an alcohol tincture, in creams and ointments, and as dried flowers which can be used to make tea.

### WHAT IS IT USED FOR?

Calendula is commonly used:

- ◆ In ointments and creams for many kinds of skin problems, including minor cuts, scrapes, burns, and rashes..
- ◆ As a mouthwash to treat canker sores or cold sores.
- ◆ As an eyewash to treat irritated eyes (not recommended)

### WHAT HAVE STUDIES SHOWN?

There have not been many scientific studies of calendula's effects. However, in animal studies it helped some skin problems heal faster and be less swollen.

There have been no studies in humans of calendula's effects when it is taken by mouth.

### WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS?

Side effects are rare, but some people may have an allergic reaction, including itching or hives. People who are allergic to ragweed are more likely to be allergic to calendula.

### IS IT SAFE FOR CHILDREN AND PREGNANT WOMEN?

- ◆ Calendula can cause uterine contractions in animals, so pregnant women should not take it by mouth. External use is safe.
- ◆ There are no studies of calendula's safety for children or women who are breastfeeding. There have not been any reports of problems.

### WILL IT INTERFERE WITH MY MEDICAL CONDITION?

Calendula products are safe for most skin conditions. Check with your doctor or nurse practitioner if you are already being treated for a skin problem.

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## WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

- ◆ If you have a sore that looks infected or does not heal, you should see your doctor or nurse practitioner.
- ◆ Rinsing the eyes with calendula is not recommended because the liquid can become contaminated and cause an infection or irritation.
- ◆ Always tell your doctor or nurse practitioner if you are taking any herbal product, and before starting any new one. Your health care provider needs to know everything you are taking to help you make decisions about your health care. Herbs can cause problems with other herbs, dietary supplements, or medications.
- ◆ Herbal products may contain chemicals or other species of plants.

## SEE ALSO:

Calendula Complete Monograph: <http://www.mcp.edu/herbal/calendula/calendula.pdf>

Calendula Clinician Information Summary:

<http://www.mcp.edu/herbal/calendula/calendula.cis.pdf>

Information on OnHealth.com: <http://onhealth.com/alternative/resource/herbs/item,15960.asp>