**Arnica** (ar-ny-kuh)

**Other Name(s):**
- **Scientific Name:** Arnica montana, leopard's bane, mountain tobacco, mountain snuff, wolf's bane

**Classification:**
- **Therapeutic:** immune stimulants, gastrointestinal anti-inflammatories

**Common Uses:**
- Topical treatment of bruises, burns, acne, boils, sprains, muscle, and joint pain.

**Action:**
- Polysaccharides in arnica may produce a slight anti-inflammatory and analgesic effect. Some antibacterial effects are seen, in addition to a counterirritant effect, which may aid in wound healing. **Therapeutic Effects:** Decreased inflammation. Pain relief.

**Pharmacokinetics:**
- **Absorption:** Systemic absorption may occur following topical application to broken skin.
- **Distribution:** Unknown.
- **Metabolism and Excretion:** Unknown.
- **Half-life:** Unknown.

**TIME/ACTION PROFILE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROUTE</th>
<th>ONSET</th>
<th>PEAK</th>
<th>DURATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topical</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>unknown</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Contraindications/Precautions:**
- **Contraindicated in:** Not for oral use (except in highly diluted homeopathic preparations); Arnica allergy; Avoid use on broken skin; Infectious or inflammatory GI conditions; OB: Pregnancy and lactation.
- **Use Cautiously in:** Infectious or inflammatory GI conditions; Surgery (discontinue use 2 weeks prior to procedure due to antiplatelet effects).

**Adverse Reactions/Side Effects**

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<tr>
<th>System</th>
<th>Effect</th>
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**Interactions**
- **Natural Product-Drug:** Alcohol-containing preparations may interact with disulfiram and metronidazole. Potential for reduced effectiveness of anti-hypertensives has been noted. May potentiate the effects of anticoagulants and antiplatelet agents, increasing the risk of bleeding.

**Natural Product-Natural Products:** May risk of bleeding with clove, garlic, ginger, ginkgo, and ginseng.

**Route/Commonly Used Doses**
- **Topical (Adults):**
  - **Topical—** Rub or massage arnica tincture, cream or gel onto injured area. Do not apply to broken skin;
  - **Compress—** Dilute 1 tablespoon of arnica tincture in 1/2 L water. Wet a gauze pad with solution and apply to affected area for 15 minutes. For use in poultices, dilute tincture 3 to 10 times with water.

**NURSING IMPLICATIONS**

**Assessment**
- **Topical:** After application, assess the affected area for signs of allergic response.
- **Toxicity and Overdose:** Systemic absorption may result in nausea, vomiting, organ damage, hypertension, cardio toxicity, arrhythmias, muscular weakness, collapse, vertigo, visual distortion, coma and death. If ingested orally, induce emesis and gastric lavage to remove undigested contents. Supportive care may be necessary. Do not take orally or apply to nonintact skin to avoid systemic absorption.

**Potential Nursing Diagnoses**
- Acute pain (Indications)

**Implementation**
- **Clean skin with a non-alcohol containing cleanser prior to applying arnica.** Apply topically to affected area, or site of injury ensuring skin is intact.
Do not take orally or apply to an open wound because of potential for systemic absorption with toxicity.

Patient/Family Teaching

- Teach patients to inspect the affected area for breaks in the skin and not to apply arnica to areas where the skin is broken.
- Warn patients that use on nonintact skin and oral ingestion may cause life-threatening toxicity.
- Advise patients that arnica should only be used for short periods of time in the treatment of minor aches and pains associated with local muscle, joint or skin pain.
- Prolonged use may cause allergic hypersensitivity reactions to develop.
- Instruct patients to avoid concurrent use of arnica with antihypertensive agents to avoid cardiovascular effects.
- Advise female patients to notify health care professional if pregnancy is planned or suspected.
- Arnica should be avoided during pregnancy.

Evaluation

- Relief of, or improvement in, minor aches and pains associated with muscle or joint overuse, or sprains and/or local skin irritation from insect bites, bruises, boils, or acne.

Why was this drug prescribed for your patient?