

TRETINOIN (RETIN-A) THERAPY FOR ACNE

What Is Tretinoin?

Tretinoin (trade name Retin A) is a very effective drug against acne. It is similar to Vitamin A in structure. It acts by preventing the plugging of oil glands in the skin.

How Long Does It Take To Work?

Clearing or marked improvement should occur within 2-3 months. However, during the first few weeks, the skin may look worse. Don't stop using it! The long-term results will be well worth it. In the unusual event that it does not cause sufficient improvement, additional or different therapy will be prescribed.

Is It Irritating?

The goal of therapy is to achieve only mild redness and peeling. More severe irritation can be avoided by carefully noting the following directions. In addition, a less irritating concentration of Retin-A is now available (0.025% cream). Even if irritation occurs initially, the skin often adapts, causing the irritation to diminish with time.

How Is It Used?

1. Start with one nightly application.
2. Gently wash the face with a mild soap. After drying, wait at least one-half hour before applying tretinoin.
3. Squeeze a small, pea-sized dose of medication onto the fingertip (of if the tube has a special measuring cap, use the amount it dispenses.) First, dab a portion of this amount on the forehead, each cheek, and the chin. Then spread it over the entire face and forehead, working it gently into the skin. Do no apply it only to pimples.
4. Avoid the more sensitive areas around the eyes, nose, corners of the mouth, and open wounds. Spread away from these areas when applying.
5. It should become invisible almost immediately. If it is still visible, or if dry flaking occurs within a minute or so, you are using too much.
6. Use a hat and/or sunscreen when you expect to be in the sun.
7. If nightly application results in more than mild redness and peeling, decrease the frequency to every other night or however often is needed to maintain a mild flush.

How To Use With Other Acne Medications:

If you have been instructed to use other acne medication on you skin, use these in the morning. This is especially important for benzoyl peroxide. When applied at the same time as tretinoin, effectiveness is reduced.

Other potentially irritating acne products (such as benzoyl peroxide) increase the likelihood of irritation when tretinoin is started. If your doctor has advised you to continue using other acne medications, start off using tretinoin every other night. If this does not cause any problem after two weeks, use the tretinoin every night.