

Isotretinoin: Post-Treatment Information

This leaflet aims to answer any questions you may have now that your treatment has finished.

How long do the side-effects of Isotretinoin last?

The side-effects should start getting better as soon as you stop taking Isotretinoin. However, the drug remains in your system for a month, so be aware that your acne may carry on getting better for some time after you stop taking it. Your skin may remain fragile / delicate for up to 6 months after you have finished your Isotretinoin. Waxing, dermabrasion, laser treatment, non-urgent skin surgery, body piercings and tattoos should still be avoided.

Female patients must remember to continue using **two** forms of contraception for one month after stopping Isotretinoin. If you become pregnant whilst Isotretinoin is still in your system, there is an extremely high risk that your baby will be born with severe and serious birth defects. There is also an increased risk of suffering a miscarriage.

Will my acne return?

For most people, acne does not return after Isotretinoin has been discontinued. However, you may still experience the occasional spot. Continue with a gentle skin care routine using skin cleansers and moisturisers that are oil free. Look out for skin care products that are labelled 'non-comedogenic', 'oil free' or 'non-greasy'.

You may have been advised to commence Differin cream post treatment. This is to be used as a *preventative measure* to stop your spots recurring. Prescriptions can be obtained from your GP and commenced five weeks after finishing your course of Isotretinoin treatment.

How to use Differin™ (adapalene) cream

- Differin™ cream should be applied thinly twice a week before going to bed.
- Clean and dry the skin thoroughly before applying Differin™. Use a mild cleanser and pat rather than rub the skin dry. Using clean fingertips, apply enough Differin™ to thinly cover the area affected by acne (for example your whole face, not just individual spots or blackheads). Then wash your hands.

- Don't apply Differin™ to broken, sunburnt or sensitive areas of skin, or skin affected by eczema. Also take care to avoid getting it on your eyelids or lips, or in your eyes, nose or mouth. If you accidentally get the cream or gel on these areas, wash it off with warm water.
- If you want to apply moisturisers or cosmetics, wait until the Differin™ has been absorbed into your skin for about one hour.
- Avoid excessive exposure to sunlight, protect your skin with an oil free high factor sunscreen (SPF 30 or above).
- Don't apply Differin™ more than once a day; this won't make it any more effective or work any quicker. It may also make your skin very red or irritated or start peeling.

If mild acne continues or your acne recurs, the first step is treatment from your GP. Antibiotic creams and tablets can be very effective for acne after a course of Isotretinoin, even if not effective before, and these should be the first thing to try.

What if my acne returns, and is as severe as it was before?

This only occurs in a small number of people. You should discuss the situation with your GP. As stated previously, antibiotics may now work. However, if they don't work, then you may need another course of Isotretinoin, and your GP will have to refer you back to the Dermatologist.

Can anything be done to help scarring?

Isotretinoin treats new acne spots and stops new scars from forming. It does not help any scars that may already be present. The good news is that red, prominent scars often fade with time. Lasers and peels can help acne scars but are not available on the NHS. If you are considering treatment, it is important to realise that any procedures (for example chemical peels) carry a risk of scarring in themselves. You may have read lots of claims about treatment for scars on the internet. It is advisable to discuss these treatments with your GP or Dermatologist first.

For further information and support:

www.acnesupport.org.uk

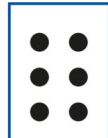
www.skinhealthinfo.org.uk

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