

Retinoid Information and Use

Generic name: Tretinoin

ATRALIN, DIFFERIN, EPIDUO, RENOVA, RETIN A, TAZORAC, VELTIN, ZIANA

What are Retinoids used for?

- Acne “White Heads” and “Black Heads”
- Fine Lines and Wrinkles

General information

Retinoids are a group of topical medications used to treat acne and cater to varying skin types: dry, sensitive, or oily. Treatment time varies according to individual needs and can be continued indefinitely. Retinoids work by gently exfoliating the skin, turning over skin cells at a faster pace than would normally occur. This helps decrease the amount of acne present and acts as a first line treatment against fine lines, uneven skin tone and wrinkles.

Directions for use

To appropriately use a retinoid, apply a small, pea size amount of product to clean skin every other night. A pea size amount of medication is used for an area of skin the size of an open hand. After two weeks, if skin is not dry or irritated, you may increase use to every night. Slight irritation, redness, and flaking should be expected. If severe irritation, redness, or flaking develop, discontinue use of the medication and contact your practitioner. After the first month or so of treatments minor irritation, redness, and flaking often resolve themselves as the skin will better tolerate the product.

When to apply the product

In the evening, after showering or washing the face, wait 20 minutes before applying product. Apply after your moisturizer.

Side Effects / Warnings

Photosensitivity: You may experience light sensitivity resulting in more severe sunburn than normal while using retinoids in direct sunlight. Use of SPF 30 or greater as well as clothing to block direct sun exposure can help to decrease the sensitivity.

Irritation: Some patients may experience an exaggerated irritation to the medication. If this occurs, discontinue use of medication and contact your practitioner, you may need a milder formulation.

Pregnancy Warning: If you think you might be pregnant, it is advised to stop the medication immediately since treatment during pregnancy may cause birth defects.

Skin Fragility: Avoid waxing, depilatory hair removal treatments, and certain chemical peels and laser treatments while using a retinoid. Skin may be more fragile while using a retinoid product and superficial burns may occur. Consult your practitioner for safe alternative products if you wish to remove hair, have a chemical peel, or laser treatments while using retinoids.