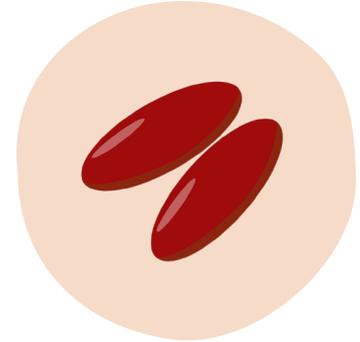


Isotretinoin

What is isotretinoin?

Isotretinoin is a tablet medication used to treat acne. It works by reducing the amount of oil produced by your skin which stops pimples forming.



How do I take isotretinoin?

- ✓ You need to have a blood test before you start isotretinoin and 2 months after starting.
- ✓ If you miss a dose, do not take double, just skip that dose.
- ✓ Take it with food, it is best to take it with dinner.

What should I avoid while taking isotretinoin?

- ✗ Do not become pregnant while taking isotretinoin or for 1-month after stopping isotretinoin, it can be very harmful to the baby.
- ✗ Do not donate blood, you can only do this at least 1 month after stopping isotretinoin.
- ✗ Do not share isotretinoin with other people.
- ✗ Do not go out into the sun without sunscreen, a hat, sun protective clothes and sunglasses.
- ✗ Avoid waxing, IPL and laser while taking isotretinoin.
- ✗ Avoid getting tattoos and piercings while taking isotretinoin.
- ✓ If you see a beautician, let them know you are taking isotretinoin.
- ✓ Let your skin doctor know if you wear contact lenses.



Isotretinoin

What are some side effects and what should I do?

Common

- ◉ **Dry skin:** Use a gentle soap-free wash in the shower and apply a moisturiser following.
- ◉ **Dry eyes:** Use preservative-free lubricating eye drops (from the chemist).
- ◉ **Dry lips or cracked corners of the mouth:** Use Vaseline®, Paw-Paw ointment or similar for your lips – reapply every few hours.
- ◉ **Dry nose:** Use a saline spray regularly.
- ◉ **Worsening of acne:** This can occur in the first 1-2 months of starting isotretinoin, and is why you are started on a low dose that is slowly increased. If you are concerned you are having severe worsening of acne, stop taking isotretinoin and contact the clinic.
- ◉ **Sunburn:** Wear sunscreen every day (reapplying every 2 hours if outdoors), a hat and sun-protective clothing.
- ◉ **Ingrown nails:** Put Betadine® or similar on the area twice daily and stop isotretinoin until you are seen in clinic.



Uncommon

If you experience any of the rare side effects listed below, stop isotretinoin and contact the clinic for review.

- ◉ **Headaches**
- ◉ **Muscle aches:** Avoid repetitive heavy weights and intense exercise. Stay well hydrated during exercise.
- ◉ **Hearing or vision problems**
- ◉ **Changes in mood:** While the research shows low mood is less likely in those patients with acne taking isotretinoin, very rarely patients may describe a worsening mood.

Your blood tests will be monitored for changes in liver enzymes and cholesterol levels, which can uncommonly occur.

Your recommended products:

Want more information? Visit dermnetnz.org or dermcoll.edu.au/a-to-z-of-skin

This factsheet was developed as part of the Koolungar Moorditj Healthy Skin Project.