



Advanced[®] Dermatology

Skin Cancer and
Laser Surgery Center, P.C.

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All About Accutane (Isotretinoin)

Accutane is a pill that is a derivative of vitamin A. People typically take it for 5-6 months to clear up their acne. For most patients, it is a permanent cure. Once you start on Accutane, you discontinue any and all other medications.

Possible Side Effects:

1. It will make your skin dry. This is a guarantee. It is important to use lotion and chapstick to help minimize that. Vanicream is recommended for body, Cerave PM for face, and Aquaphor for lips.
2. It can cause nosebleeds due to dryness. To minimize nosebleeds, you can use Vaseline or Aquaphor up your nostrils at bedtime, use a saline nasal spray, or sleep with a humidifier in your bedroom.
3. It makes some people achy: this typically affects the back or knees and is usually mild (this is more common in boys than girls). It is okay to take Advil or Aleve if needed.
4. We have to do bloodwork for Accutane. We check liver function tests and triglycerides before the medicine is started and after the patient has been on it for two months.
5. The medicine has been associated with depression. It is important to tell a parent or your doctor about any mood issues on the medication.
6. In the past there have been concerns that Accutane increases risk for inflammatory bowel disease (Crohn's or ulcerative colitis). Recent data shows that Accutane is NOT associated with these conditions.
7. The medication causes HORRIBLE birth defects if a pregnant woman takes the medicine. Boys should not share their medication or donate blood. Girls have to follow several particular rules (see below).

The iPledge Program:

The iPledge Program was created to try to prevent pregnant women from being exposed to Accutane. Boys have to fill out paperwork prior to starting the medication and have to be seen in office every month. Girls have to register as well as follow several other rules and regulations. The iPledge program **REQUIRES** the last four digits of the patient's social security number in order to register the patient.

Girls have to do the following:

1. Urine pregnancy test (UPT) every month (and two UPT's spaced a month apart from each other before the medicine is started).
2. Declare forms of birth control.
3. Come in for an appointment every 30-39 days (timing is very strict).
4. Answer questions online on the iPledge website every month.