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2. Retin-A

Retin-A

Pronunciation: *ret-in-A*

Generic name: [tretinoin](#)

Brand names: Retin-A, Retin-A Micro

Dosage form: cream (0.1%, 0.05%, 0.025%), gel (0.1%, 0.08% 0.04%)

Drug class: [Topical acne agents](#)

Medically reviewed by [Philip Thornton, DipPharm](#). Last updated on Feb 5, 2024.

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What is Retin-A?

Retin-A is a form of vitamin A that helps the skin renew itself.

The Retin-A and Avita brands of tretinoin are used to treat acne. The Renova brand of tretinoin is used to reduce the appearance of fine wrinkles and mottled skin discoloration, and to make rough facial skin feel smoother.

Retin-A may also be used for purposes not listed in this medication guide.

Warnings

When using Retin-A avoid exposure to sunlight or artificial UV rays (sunlamps or tanning beds). Retin-A can make your skin more sensitive to sunlight and sunburn may result. Use a sunscreen (minimum SPF 15) and wear protective clothing if you must be out in the sun. Avoid getting Retin-A in your eyes, mouth, and nose, or on your lips. If it does get into any of these areas, wash with water. Do not use Retin-A on sunburned, windburned, dry, chapped, irritated, or broken skin. Also avoid using this medication in wounds or on areas of eczema. Wait until these conditions have healed before using Retin-A.

Use this medication for as many days as it has been prescribed for you even if you think it is not working. It may take weeks or months of use before you notice improvement in your skin. If you are using Retin-A to treat acne, your condition may get slightly worse for a short time when you first start using the medication. Call your doctor if skin irritation becomes severe or if your acne does not improve within 8 to 12 weeks.

Tell each of your healthcare providers about all your medical conditions, allergies, and all medicines you use.

Before using Retin-A

You should not use Retin-A if you are allergic to tretinoin.

It is not known whether Retin-A will harm an unborn baby. Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become

pregnant while using this medication.

It is not known whether tretinoin topical passes into breast milk or if it could harm a nursing baby. Tell your doctor if you are breast-feeding a baby.

i [Retin-A pregnancy and breastfeeding warnings](#) (more detail)

How should I use Retin-A?

Use Retin-A exactly as your doctor has prescribed it for you. Follow all directions on your prescription label. Do not use this medicine in larger or smaller amounts or for longer than recommended.

Do not take by mouth. Retin-A is for use only on the skin. Do not use this medicine on open wounds or on sunburned, windburned, dry, chapped, or irritated skin.

Using more medicine or applying it more often than prescribed will not make it work any faster, and may increase side effects.

Wash your hands before and after applying Retin-A. Then, wash your skin with a mild soap and dry gently. Wait 20 to 30 minutes before applying medication; it is important for skin to be completely dry in order to minimize possible irritation.

Do not wash the treated area for at least 1 hour after applying Retin-A. Avoid the use of other skin products on the treated area for at least 1 hour following application of Retin-A.

Keep the medication away from the corners of the nose, mouth, eyes and open wounds.

Applying an excessive amount of Retin-A gel may result in "pilling" of the medication. If this occurs, use a thinner layer of gel with the next application.

Retin-A should be used as part of a complete skin care program that includes avoiding sunlight and using an effective sunscreen and protective clothing.

Use this medication for the full prescribed length of time, even if you think it is not working.

It may take up to several weeks before you notice improvement in your skin. Keep using the medication as directed and tell your doctor if your symptoms do not improve. When using Retin-A to treat acne, your condition may get slightly worse for a short time when you first start using the medication.

Call your doctor if skin irritation becomes severe or if your acne does not improve within 8 to 12 weeks.

Store at room temperature away from moisture and heat. Keep the bottle tightly closed when not in use.

Retin-A gel is flammable. Do not use near high heat or open flame. Do not smoke until the gel has completely dried on your skin. Keep tube tightly closed.

i [Detailed Retin-A dosage information](#)

What happens if I miss a dose?

Use the missed dose as soon as you remember. Skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next scheduled dose. Do not use extra medicine to make up the missed dose.

What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention or call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222.

What should I avoid?

Avoid exposure to sunlight or tanning beds. **Retin-A can make you sunburn more easily.** Wear protective clothing and use sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher) when you are outdoors, even on a cloudy day.

Avoid getting this medication in your eyes, nose, mouth, or in the creases of your nose.

Avoid using skin products that can cause irritation, such as harsh soaps, shampoos, or skin cleansers, hair coloring or permanent chemicals, hair removers or waxes, or skin products with alcohol, spices, astringents, or lime.

Avoid using other medications on the areas you treat with Retin-A unless your doctor tells you to.

Retin-A side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have any **signs of an allergic reaction to Retin-A**: hives; difficult breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Stop using Retin-A and call your doctor at once if you have:

- severe burning, stinging, or irritation of treated skin;
- severe redness, swelling, blistering, peeling, or crusting;

Your skin may be more sensitive to weather extremes such as cold and wind while using this medicine.

Common Retin-A side effects may include:

- mild warmth or stinging where the medicine was applied; or
- changes in color of treated skin.

This is not a complete list of side effects and others may occur. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

 [Retin-A side effects](#) (more detail)

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What other drugs will affect Retin-A?

Do not use skin products that contain benzoyl peroxide, sulfur, resorcinol, or salicylic acid unless otherwise directed by your doctor. These products can cause severe skin irritation if used with Retin-A.

It is not likely that other drugs you take orally or inject will have an effect on topically applied tretinoin. But many drugs can interact with each other. Tell each of your health care providers about all medicines you use, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal products.

 [Retin-A drug interactions](#) (more detail)

Does Retin-A interact with my other drugs?

Enter medications to view a detailed interaction report using our [Drug Interaction Checker](#).

Retin-A

+

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Further information

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use Retin-A only for the indication prescribed.

Always consult your healthcare provider to ensure the information displayed on this page applies to your personal circumstances.

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DRUG STATUS

Availability	
Rx	Prescription only
Pregnancy & Lactation	
	Risk data available
CSA Schedule*	
N/A	Not a controlled drug
Approval History	
10+ years	FDA approved 1971

User Reviews & Ratings

7.9 / 10

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