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2. Differin

# Differin

**Generic name:** [adapalene topical](#) [ *a-DAP-a-leen-TOP-i-kal* ]**Drug class:** [Topical acne agents](#)Medically reviewed by [Melisa Puckey, BPharm](#). Last updated on Mar 1, 2024.[Uses](#) [Warnings](#) [Before taking](#) [Dosage](#) [Side effects](#) [Interactions](#) [FAQ](#)

## What is Differin?

Differin is a topical medicine (a medication that is applied to the surface of the skin) similar to vitamin A. It helps the skin to renew itself.

Differin is used to treat severe [acne](#) in people who are at least 12 years old. It works by decreasing acne formation.

Differin may also be used for purposes not listed in this medication guide.

## Warnings

Avoid getting Differin in your eyes, in the creases of your nose, or on your lips. If it does get into any of these areas, wash with water. Do not use this medicine 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 Differin.

Do not use skin products that contain alpha hydroxy or glycolic acid while you are also using Differin.

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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. Do not use other medication skin products unless your doctor has told you to.

Avoid exposure to sunlight or artificial UV rays (sunlamps or tanning beds). Differin 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.

## Before taking this medicine

You should not use Differin if you are allergic to adapalene.

Ask a doctor or pharmacist if it is safe for you to use this medicine if you have other medical conditions.

It is not known whether adapalene passes into breast milk or if it could harm a nursing baby. **Do not use this medicine without a doctor's advice if you are breast-feeding a baby.**

It is not known whether Differin will harm an unborn baby. **Do not use this medicine without a doctor's advice if you are pregnant.**

Differin is not approved for use by anyone younger than 12 years old.

 [Differin pregnancy and breastfeeding warnings](#) (more detail)

## How should I use Differin?

Use Differin exactly as your doctor has prescribed it for you. Use exactly as directed on the label. Do not use in larger amounts or for longer than recommended. Using Differin in larger amounts than recommended will not make it work faster, and may cause unpleasant side effects.

Do not take by mouth. Differin is for use only on the skin.

Differin is usually applied once daily in the evening.

Wash your hands before applying this medicine.

Clean your skin with a mild non-medicated skin cleanser before applying the medicine. Pat the skin dry with a clean towel.

Apply a thin layer to the entire face or other affected skin areas. Avoid applying the medicine to the creases of your nose, or on your lips.

Do not apply to open wounds or on sunburned, windburned, dry, chapped, or irritated skin. Do not apply any other skin products unless your doctor has told you to.

Avoid getting this medicine in your eyes, nose, or mouth.

You may use a skin moisturizer if your skin becomes dry while using Differin. Avoid creams or lotions that contain alpha hydroxy or glycolic acids.

It may take several weeks before your acne improves, and it may get slightly worse for a short time when you first start using Differin. Keep using the medication as directed, even if you think it is not working.

Call your doctor if skin symptoms do not begin to improve within 8 to 12 weeks of using this medicine.

Do not use Differin to treat any condition that has not been checked by your doctor.

Store at room temperature away from moisture and heat. Do not freeze.

## Dosing information

### Usual Adult Dose for Acne:

Differin 0.1% cream, 0.1% gel, 0.3% gel:

Apply to the affected area once a day at bedtime after washing. A thin film should be applied, avoiding eyes, lips, angles of the nose, and mucous membranes.

Lotion: Apply a thin film of lotion to the entire face and other affected areas of the skin once daily, after washing gently with a mild soapless cleanser. Dispense a nickel size amount of lotion (3 to 4 actuations of the pump) to cover the entire face. Avoid application to the areas of skin around eyes, lips and mucous membranes.

### Usual Pediatric Dose for Acne:

Differin 0.1% cream, 0.1% gel, 0.3% gel:

11 years or less: Safety and efficacy have not been established.

12 to 18 years: Apply to the affected area once a day at bedtime after washing. A thin film should be applied, avoiding eyes, lips, angles of the nose, and mucous membranes.

Safety and effectiveness of the lotion formulation in pediatric patients under the age of 12 have not been established.

 [Detailed Differin dosage information](#)

## What happens if I miss a dose?

Apply the medication as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and wait until your next regularly scheduled dose. Do not apply extra medicine to make up the missed dose.

## What happens if I overdose?

Seek emergency medical attention if you think you have used too much of this medicine. Overdose symptoms may include skin redness, scaling, or irritation.

## What should I avoid while using Differin?

Avoid exposure to sunlight or tanning beds. Differin can make you sunburn more easily. Wear protective clothing and use sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher) when you are outdoors.

Avoid using other skin medications that contain sulfur, resorcinol, or salicylic acid (common in topical acne medications or skin cleansers).

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.

## Differin side effects

Get emergency medical help if you have **signs of an allergic reaction to Differin**: hives, itching; chest pain, difficult breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Stop using this medicine and call your doctor at once if you have:

- skin redness, stinging, burning, or peeling after sun exposure.

Some side effects may occur during the first 4 weeks of using this medicine. These side effects should become less

noticeable with continued use.

Common Differin side effects may include:

- dry, red, or scaly skin;
- feeling of warmth and mild stinging or burning;
- peeling skin; or
- skin pain.

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.

 [Differin side effects](#) (more detail)

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## What other drugs will affect Differin?

It is not likely that other drugs you take orally or inject will have an effect on topically applied adapalene. 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.

 [Differin drug interactions](#) (more detail)

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

Differin

+

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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 Differin only for the indication prescribed.


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

[Medical Disclaimer](#)


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### DRUG STATUS

**Availability**  
 Rx and/or OTC

**Pregnancy & Lactation**  
 Risk data available

**CSA Schedule\***  
**N/A** Not a controlled drug

**Approval History**  
 FDA approved 1996



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6.1 / 10

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