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# Targretin

**Generic name:** [bexarotene](#) [ *bex-AR-oh-teen* ]**Drug class:** [Miscellaneous antineoplastics](#)[Medically reviewed](#) by Drugs.com on Nov 27, 2024. Written by [Cerner Multum](#).[Uses](#) [Side effects](#) [Warnings](#) [Before taking](#) [Dosage](#) [Interactions](#)

## What is Targretin?

[Targretin](#) is used to treat skin lesions caused by a rare type of cancer called [cutaneous T-cell lymphoma](#). This medicine is usually given after other treatments have failed.

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

## Targretin side effects

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

**Targretin may cause serious side effects. Call your doctor at once if you have:**

- blurred vision, eye pain, or seeing halos around lights;
- **low blood cell counts**--fever, chills, tiredness, mouth sores, skin sores, [sore throat](#), cough, pale skin, cold hands and feet, feeling light-headed or short of breath;
- **pancreatitis**--severe pain in your upper stomach spreading to your back, nausea and vomiting; or
- **signs of underactive thyroid**--extreme tiredness, dry skin, [constipation](#), feeling more sensitive to cold temperatures, weight gain.

Your cancer treatments may be delayed or permanently discontinued if you have certain side effects.

**Common side effects of Targretin may include:**

- low blood cell counts;
- headache, weakness;
- nausea, stomach pain;
- rash, dry skin; or
- swelling in your hands or feet.

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.

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

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## Warnings

Targretin can harm an unborn baby or cause birth defects if the mother or the father is using Targretin. **Do not use this medicine if you are pregnant.**

**Both men and women using Targretin should use effective birth control to prevent pregnancy, beginning 1 month before starting and continuing until at least 1 month after stopping treatment.**

**Stop using this medicine and tell your doctor right away if you stop using birth control, if you miss a menstrual period, or if a pregnancy occurs while either the mother or the father is using Targretin.**

## Before taking this medicine

You should not use Targretin if you are allergic to it, or if you are pregnant.

Tell your doctor if you have ever had:

- [high cholesterol](#) or triglycerides (a type of fat in the blood);
- [pancreatitis](#);
- [liver disease](#);
- a thyroid disorder;
- cataracts;
- diabetes;
- [ovarian cancer](#);
- [gallbladder disease](#);
- if you drink large amounts of alcohol; or
- if you are allergic to any other retinoids ([isotretinoin](#), [tretinoin](#), [acitretin](#), Accutane, [Soriatane](#), Vesanoid).

**Targretin can harm an unborn baby or cause birth defects if the mother or the father is using this medicine.**

**If you are a man**, use condoms during sex if your partner is pregnant or is able to get pregnant. Keep using condoms while taking Targretin and for at least 1 month after your last dose.

**If you are a woman**, do not use Targretin if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. You must have a negative pregnancy test 7 days before you start taking this medicine and once per month during treatment.

- You should start taking Targretin on the 2nd or 3rd day of a normal menstrual period.
- Use 2 effective forms of [birth control](#) beginning 1 month before you start taking Targretin, and continuing until at least 1 month after your last dose.
- At least one of your forms of birth control should be non-hormonal such as a condom, cervical cap, contraceptive sponge, IUD, or diaphragm with spermicide.
- Stop taking the medicine and tell your doctor right away if you stop using birth control, or if you miss a menstrual period.

**If a pregnancy occurs while either the mother or the father is using Targretin, stop taking the medicine and tell your doctor right away.**

You should not breastfeed while you are using Targretin.

## How should I use Targretin?

Follow all directions on your prescription label and read all medication guides or instruction sheets. Your doctor may occasionally change your dose. Use the medicine exactly as directed.

Take with food.

Swallow the capsule whole and do not crush, chew, break, or open it. Do not dissolve a capsule in liquid or allow it to dissolve in your mouth.

Targretin doses are based on body surface area (height and weight). Your dose needs may change if you gain or lose weight.

You will need frequent blood tests before and during treatment with Targretin. You may need to be fasting (nothing to eat for a certain number of hours) before your blood tests. Further doses may be delayed until your blood tests are normal.

Store at room temperature away from moisture, heat, and light.

It may take up several weeks or months before you receive the full benefit of taking Targretin. Your doctor will determine how long to treat you.

 [Detailed Targretin dosage information](#)

## What happens if I miss a dose?

Take the medicine **with food** as soon as you can, but skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next dose. **Do not** take two doses at one time.

## What happens if I overdose?

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

## What should I avoid while taking Targretin?

Grapefruit may interact with Targretin and lead to unwanted side effects. **Avoid the use of grapefruit products.**

Avoid taking a [vitamin A](#) supplement without your doctor's advice. Use only the amount your doctor recommends.

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

## What other drugs will affect Targretin?

**Tell your doctor about all your current medicines.** Many drugs can affect Targretin, especially:

- [gemfibrozil](#);
- insulin or oral diabetes medicine.
- an [antibiotic](#) or antifungal medicine;

- antiviral medicine; or
- seizure medicine.

**This list is not complete and many other drugs may affect Targretin.** This includes prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and [herbal products](#). Not all possible [drug interactions](#) are listed here.

**i** [Targretin drug interactions](#) (more detail)

## Does Targretin interact with my other drugs?

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

Targretin

+

Enter a drug name

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## Patient resources

- [Targretin \(Bexarotene Oral\) advanced reading](#)

## Professional resources

- [Targretin prescribing information](#)
- [Bexarotene \(AHFS Monograph\)](#)

## Other formulations

- [Targretin topical](#)

## Related treatment guides

- [Cutaneous T-cell Lymphoma](#)

## Further information

Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of the reach of children, never share your medicines with others, and use this medication 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 1999



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[Targretin 75 mg \(Targretin\)](#)

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