



BENZOYL PEROXIDE

Benzoyl peroxide is a commonly used acne medication that is available both in prescription forms and over-the-counter. Some products are meant to be left on and others are used as a wash or cleanser.

- Any acne therapy may take up to two to three months to be effective.
- Treating the entire affected area regularly helps prevent new outbreaks. This is often more effective than spot treatment.

Side Effects:

1. Dryness, peeling, or irritation can occur. Avoid harsh or abrasive cleansers when using benzoyl peroxide products. Gentle cleansers and moisturizers (Cetaphil, CeraVe, Aveeno, etc.) can improve tolerability. Reducing the frequency of use or duration of use (with wash-off formulations) can help also. Avoid the lips and eyes.
2. These medications will bleach clothing, fabric, hair, towels, etc.
3. Stop use and call for further instructions if you become pregnant while using benzoyl peroxide.

Wash-Off Formulations:

1. The shower is a good place to use these. If used at the sink, be careful to avoid bleaching clothing.
2. Rinse thoroughly and use a white towel or an old towel to minimize unwanted bleaching.
3. Rinse off after **2-5 minutes**. The face is often more sensitive, so start with a 20-second application time before rinsing.
4. Begin using once a day for a week, then gradually move to two times a day if tolerated.

Leave-On Formulations (gels, creams, lotions)

1. Treating the entire affected area is often more effective than spot treatment. Only a thin layer is needed. Wash hands well after application to minimize bleaching. Using these on the lower neck or body can lead to bleaching of clothes.
2. Do not use Aczone or hydroquinone (bleaching creams) at the same time as a benzoyl peroxide product as it can stain the skin.
3. Benzoyl peroxide products can also degrade some topical retinoids.