



ISOTRETINOIN (ACUTANE, CLARIVIS, SOTRET, AMNESTEEM)

Isotretinoin is a pill that is used to treat acne and a number of other skin conditions. It is unique in that it can cure acne. Other medications work only as long as you take them. It is typically used for a 5-month course. Some people's acne will reappear years afterwards, but it is typically much milder if it does. In some patients it has to be repeated at some point.

Dosage instructions differ significantly from person to person based on weight, response to treatment, and side effects. Isotretinoin is typically taken once a day, but half can be taken in the morning and half in the evening if it upsets your stomach.

Do not give this medicine to anyone else or donate blood while taking it.

It is not uncommon for acne to get worse before it gets better.

Lab Work

- Blood should be drawn a couple days before each appointment. It has to be done fasting (before anything has been eaten that day), so early in the morning is often best.

Potential Side Effects

- Dry lips and nose – Everyone gets this and discomfort can be relieved with Chapstick, Aquaphor or Vaseline.
- Nosebleeds – A humidifier in the bedroom or saline nasal spray can help prevent them.
- Dry eyes – Lubricating drops or artificial tears can help.
- Joint and muscle aches – These are fairly common and not of concern as long as they are mild.
- If abdominal pain, headache, nausea, vomiting, or double vision occur, stop and let us know.
- **For females, two forms of contraception are required as isotretinoin causes BIRTH DEFECTS. Birth control must be continued for 30 days after the last dose until the medication has cleared from your system.**
- There is concern that isotretinoin can cause depression and potentially suicide. This has not been proven in medical studies, but I believe that it can affect some people's mood.
- Isotretinoin requires monthly blood work monitoring for damage to the liver and high fat levels in the blood which can lead to inflammation of the pancreas, a potentially life-threatening problem. Pregnancy testing is included for females.
- You may not be a candidate for laser resurfacing or aggressive chemical peels for up to a year after a course of Accutane as there may be an increased risk of significant scarring in this timeframe.
- You should not take isotretinoin if you have had LASIK eye surgery within the last 6 months or plan to have LASIK during treatment or within 6 months after isotretinoin therapy.

iPledge

iPledge is a monitoring program initiated by the FDA to monitor the use of this potent medication. All patients are given a unique identification number and females have to answer a series of questions (online or by telephone) each month before filling the prescription. Instructions are in the iPledge packet that you receive. Follow up appointments for refills have to be at least 30 days apart. **For females, prescriptions must be filled within 7 days of your pregnancy test. For males it must be filled within 30 days of your visit. We cannot write you a new prescription if you do not fill it within this timeframe.** You will not be eligible for a new one until another 30 days have passed.