



SPIRONOLACTONE (Aldactone)

Spironolactone is a hormone blocking pill that can be used to treat acne, hair loss, and other conditions.

Dosage Instructions:

Spironolactone is usually started at 25mg (1 pill) twice a day and can be safely increased up to 100mg (4 pills) a day in most people if needed. It takes 3-4 months for onset and full effect may not be realized for a year.

Potential side effects:

1. Not to be used if pregnant. It can affect the development of the male fetus. Birth control is required. Spironolactone also cannot be used by nursing mothers because the drug's major metabolite, canrenone, has been detected in breast milk.
2. Increased breast tenderness, swelling, and irregular menstrual bleeding can occur, but these are typically not problematic when used with birth control pills. Menstrual problems may often resolve after 2-3 months of therapy.
3. Although Spironolactone is a diuretic, (water pill), it is a very weak one, and most patients do not notice a significant increase in urination.
4. Avoid spironolactone if you have significant kidney disease.
5. If you are taking a diuretic (water pill), angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors or are taking a potassium supplement, inform your dermatologist prior to starting spironolactone. Spironolactone can increase the level of potassium in your bloodstream. This is generally only an issue for people with kidney disease, but some people suggest avoiding salt substitutes that contain potassium while taking Spironolactone.
6. Call if get new onset of muscle cramps

The Food and Drug Administration has a long-standing Black Box Warning regarding spironolactone. Such warnings can send a chill down the spine of physicians and patients alike. However, there are widespread misconceptions about what this particular warning actually says. Here it is: "Spironolactone has been shown to be a tumorigen in chronic toxicity studies in rats. Spironolactone should be used only in those conditions described under Indications and Usage. Unnecessary use of this drug should be avoided." The dosages used in those rat studies, by the way, were 25-100 times higher than those used in patients therapeutically. Definitive proof in causing malignancy is "lacking."