



Retinoids for Acne Treatment

- 1) Retinoids are a class of medicines that are related to vitamin A. These medicines help to regulate the growth of epithelial (skin) cells. These include tretinoin (Retin A), adapalene (Epiduo, Differin), and tazarotene (Tazorac). In acne treatment these medicines will exfoliate the skin and help unplug pores.
- 2) There are different strengths of retinoids, and though higher strengths can work better they can also have more side effects. Common side effects can occur at the start of using these medicines and generally improve after 2-4 weeks. Side effects include tingling, itchiness and irritation which may be red, dry, and scaly. Sometimes the acne may worsen temporarily.
- 3) There are several ways to reduce the side effects. You can use the medicine every other night or mix a little moisturizer with the medicine to dilute it.

How to apply Retinoids

- 1) At night wash your face with a mild soap or product recommended by our office. Pat dry your face. **DO NOT** use an alcohol-based astringent or toner while using retinoids.
- 2) You can then apply a moisturizer to your face followed by the retinoid or wait 20 minutes or longer to let your skin fully dry before applying the retinoid. Wet or damp skin can absorb the medicine quicker and cause irritation.
- 3) A small pea size of medicine will cover your face. You can dab small amounts of that medicine in different areas of your face, then spread it out to cover your face, or the area you're treating. Rub the medicine in until it disappears. **DO NOT** over apply. Extra medicine will be more likely to cause irritation.
- 4) In the morning after you wash your face, apply a moisturizer with sunscreen. The retinoid can dry your face. You also might be more sensitive to the sun and burn easier.
- 5) These medicines can help clear up your acne and can also help to prevent it. That is why we usually recommend applying to your whole face. Sometimes these medicines can be beneficial for spot treating your acne. We can discuss this with you at your visit.