



Taking care of your skin during isotretinoin treatment

This leaflet aims to help you build a skincare routine while on isotretinoin treatment. Some of the products mentioned are available ‘over the counter’. The Trust has no affiliation with any of these brands.

Looking after your skin whilst on isotretinoin

Maintaining a good skincare routine is important whilst on isotretinoin as the medication commonly causes dry and flaky skin, making it more sensitive. Dry cracked lips are another common issue. If your skin becomes very dry/inflamed or cracked during treatment, and over the counter skin products are not helping in the first instance, then you should contact the Dermatology Acne Clinic: 0118 322 8209 or email the Dermatology Clinical Admin Team (CAT 8) at rbb-tr.cat8dermatology@nhs.net as we may be able to offer advice on reducing your medicines or can suggest other creams to help.

Building a skincare routine

- As with all skincare products you may need to trial a few before finding one that suits you.
- Keep your skincare and lip care routine *simple*, you only require two steps:
 - Cleanser
 - Moisturiser (+/- sunscreen when necessary)
- Lip care is as important as the rest of your skin (see below).
- Stop all skin care products that contain exfoliating acids such as salicylic acid and benzoyl peroxide. Once established on isotretinoin, topical retinoids (e.g. Adapalene or Epiduo) should also be stopped.
- Look for products that are non-comedogenic (non-pore blocking) and oil free.

Cleanser

Cleansers are an important first step in any skincare routine as they help to remove dirt, make-up and sunscreen. Plus they create a clean base for the rest of your skincare routine.

You should cleanse 1-2 times daily (AM +/- PM).

Foaming cleansers and gel cleansers work well for oily/acne prone skin. However, for some people these may be too stripping while on isotretinoin.

It is best to trial a cleanser and see which one works for you.

Readily available suggested products:

- Cerave Foaming Cleanser
- Cerave Hydrating Cleanser
- Cetaphil Gentle Skin Cleanser

- Avene Tolerance Extremely Gentle Cleanser
- La Roche-Posay Toleriane Dermo Cleanser

Moisturiser

It is important to use a daily moisturiser to combat dry skin. This can be repeated as needed throughout your day.

Readily available suggested products:

- Cerave Moisturising Lotion
- Cerave Moisturising Cream
- Cetaphil Moisturising Lotion
- La Roche-Posay Cicaplast Baume B5 Repairing Balm
- Aveeno Daily Moisturising Lotion
- Neutrogena Hydro Boost Gel-Cream

Sunscreen

Sunscreen is necessary while on isotretinoin, as the medication increases sensitivity to the sun. It is particularly important to use this on sunny days or when the UV index is high.

You should apply 2-finger lengths worth to your face and neck and reapply every 2 hours.

It should always be the last step of your skincare routine.

In general you should look for the following when choosing a sunscreen:

- Broad spectrum (provides UVA & UVB protection)
- Ideally SPF 50+
- Non-comedogenic, mattifying, oil-free and anti-shine

Readily available suggested products:

- La Roche-Posay Anthelios Anti-Shine Sun Cream Gel SPF50
- Altruist SPF 50 Face fFuid Sunscreen
- Elta MD UV Daily Broad-Spectrum SPF 40
- Supergoop Unseen Sunscreen SPF30

Lip care

Dry, cracked lips are another very common complaint while taking isotretinoin. It is important to incorporate a regular lip product that you should use several times a day and before bed.

Use non-irritating lip balms and lipsticks. Try to avoid lip products that contain any of the following:

- Camphor
- Eucalyptus
- Flavouring: cinnamon, citrus, mint and peppermint flavours
- Fragrance
- Menthol
- Salicylic acid

Readily available suggested products:

- Vaseline Petroleum Jelly (plain version)
- Aquaphor Healing Ointment
- Cerave Advanced Repair Ointment
- La Roche-Posay Cicaplast Baume Lips

Further advice

<https://www.acnesupport.org.uk/>

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

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