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## Accutane/ isotretinoin treatment: Reminders and Follow-ups

### **Accutane requires 5-6+ months of monthly blood tests and visits.**

- Make sure you schedule and are present for follow-up visits each month during the treatment. We recommend scheduling 2-3 months in advance. The follow-up visits can be done via telehealth.
- We do not draw blood at our office. The blood tests can be done at a lab of your choice (we recommend QUEST OR LABCORP), and ideally should be drawn a few days *before* each monthly visit.
- Your provider cannot send in the medication to your pharmacy each month without first viewing your lab results.

### **How should I take the medication?**

Accutane/ isotretinoin is best absorbed when taken with food (a meal that includes FAT). If you are taking two pills per day, ideally you should take one pill in the morning and one in the evening. However, if you can only remember to take the medication once per day, that is fine. Take the medication at the same time every day to help you remember.

### **Can this medication make my acne worse?**

Some people can experience a flare (worsening inflammation/ pain/ redness) of their acne when starting this medication or with a dosage increase. This flare usually lasts 1 week or less. If you experience this and cannot tolerate it, please call our office at 303-604-1444. Your provider may decide to prescribe a medication to combat this flare.

### **What are the Side Effects?**

Most common/ Expected:

Dryness of skin, lips, eyes, nose

Somewhat common/ Tell your provider if you experience:

Joint Pain

Muscle Pain

Headaches

Rare side effects/ \*Stop the Medication and call our office if you experience:\*

Depression

Suicidal Thoughts

Change in Vision

Other rare side effects:

Hair loss

See IPLEDGEPROGRAM.COM for full side effect information.

**Tell your provider if you have a history of depression or are currently being treated for depression.**

While you are taking Accutane, **you should NOT:**

- Donate blood
- Get a tattoo, wax, or elective surgery during treatment or for 6 months afterwards due to risk of scarring
- Take additional Vitamin A in pill form. Check your multivitamin—often this has Vitamin A.
- Share the medication with anyone else
- Drink alcohol. If you choose to drink alcohol, you should not drink more than 1 per day.
- Drive if you experience vision changes

While on Accutane, **you should:**

- Discontinue all other acne medications (oral or topicals). You will not use any other acne medication besides Accutane during this time. It is NOT SAFE to take doxycycline or other tetracycline medications at the same time as Accutane.
- Purchase (to be used DAILY while on Accutane):
  - non-comedogenic, broad spectrum sunscreen of SPF 30-50 daily. This medication makes your skin more sensitive to sunburn. We also recommend sunscreen lip balm.
  - a thick emollient cream (Cetaphil, CeraVe or Eucerin brands) for body/ face and a thick ointment (Aquaphor or Vaseline) for lips. You will need to apply these frequently because the medication causes dryness.
  - gentle cleanser for skin to be used twice daily (Cetaphil or CeraVe are good brands)
  - Recommended: a cool mist humidifier for bedroom. This will help prevent dryness/ nosebleeds.
  - Recommended based on symptoms: For nosebleeds, saline mist/spray

**Additional Information For patients who Can Become Pregnant:**

**This medication can cause birth defects. It is very important not to become pregnant while on this medication.**

- If you have chosen “Abstinence” as your contraceptive method you must commit to this method for the entirety of your treatment and for 1 month after discontinuing treatment. Abstinence means the person who can become pregnant commits to not having any sexual contact with a partner that could result in pregnancy, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for one month before, during and for one month after isotretinoin treatment.
- If you are sexually active with a partner that could result in a pregnancy, you must commit to using 2 forms of birth control for the entirety of your treatment and 1 month afterwards. Do not switch these 2 forms of birth control while taking this medication because it may cause a delay in receiving your medication.
- Each month, you must log into IPLEDGE and answer comprehension questions about Accutane and confirm you are either abstinent or your forms of birth control. You must answer these questions before you can pick up the medication each month.

**What are the next steps?**

**For Patients who CANNOT become pregnant:**

**If you had your labs drawn prior to this appointment, after discussing with your provider to make sure the levels are safe, your provider will send in the medication.**

- Pick up the medication at your pharmacy
- Remember to have your labs drawn again a few days before your next appointment.
- Return to the office for your next appointment in 1 month

**For Patients who CANNOT become pregnant:**

**If you did NOT have labs drawn before this appointment,**

- Go to a lab (LabCorp/ Quest Labs/ hospital lab) that is conveniently located for you. Bring the lab order we gave you today. Do not eat 12 hours prior to having your labs drawn (water is ok). Show the lab the "Standing Order" part of the lab order, so that they have this order on file for you every month (that way, you won't need to bring in a paper copy of the lab order each month).
- Call our office if you do not hear back from us about your lab results 4 days after having your labs drawn
- The lab will send the results directly to us. We will call you about your results. As long as labs results are within safe limits, our staff will confirm you are registered in IPLEDGE and your provider will send in the prescription for Accutane to your preferred pharmacy
- Pick up the medication at your pharmacy
- Remember to have your labs drawn again a few days before your next appointment.
- Return to the office for your next appointment in 1 month

**~Please call our office 303-604-1444 if you have trouble obtaining your medication or if you have questions about this process. We are happy to help.~**

## **What are the next steps?**

### **For Patients who CAN become pregnant:**

**If you had your labs drawn prior to this appointment, after discussing with your provider to make sure the levels are safe, your provider will send in the medication.**

- Log in to IPLEDGE at [www.ipledgeprogram.com](http://www.ipledgeprogram.com) and answer some comprehension questions about this medication
- Pick up the medication at your pharmacy
- Remember to have your labs drawn again a few days before your next appointment.
- Return to the office for your next appointment in 1 month

### **For Patients who CAN become pregnant:**

**If you did NOT have labs drawn prior to this appointment,**

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- Pick up the medication at your pharmacy
- Remember to have your labs drawn again a few days before your next appointment.
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**~Please call our office at 303-604-1444 if you have trouble obtaining your medication or if you have questions about this process. We are happy to help.~**