



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Azelaic Acid

This information from Lexicomp® explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

Brand Names: US

Azelex; Finacea

Brand Names: Canada

Finacea

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat pimples (acne).
- It is used to treat rosacea.

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

- If you have an allergy to azelaic acid or any other part of this drug.
- If you are allergic to any drugs like this one, any other drugs, foods, or other substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had, like rash; hives; itching; shortness of breath; wheezing; cough; swelling of face, lips,

tongue, or throat; or any other signs.

- If you are breast-feeding or plan to breast-feed.

This drug may interact with other drugs or health problems.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?

All products:

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- It may take several weeks to see the full effects.
- If you use this drug too often, your skin problem may become worse.
- Use of other skin products while using this drug may cause more irritation.
- Talk with your doctor before you use other drugs or products on your skin.
- It is common to have skin irritation with this drug. Skin irritation may include burning, itching, or stinging. Most of

the time, skin irritation happened during the first few weeks after starting this drug. Call your doctor if you have skin irritation that is very bad, bothers you, or does not go away.

- If you have asthma, use this drug with care. Worsening of asthma has happened in people using this drug. Call your doctor right away if your asthma gets worse while you use this drug.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan on getting pregnant. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks of using this drug while you are pregnant.

Foam and gel:

- Avoid alcohol, hot foods and drinks, and spicy foods while using this drug.

Foam:

- This drug may catch on fire. Do not use near an open flame or while smoking.

What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?

WARNING/CAUTION: Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red,

swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.

- Change in color of skin.
- Shortness of breath.

What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if you have any side effects that bother you or do not go away.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

All products:

- Do not take this drug by mouth. Use on your skin only. Keep out of your mouth, nose, and eyes (may burn).
- If this drug gets in the eyes, rinse with a lot of water. If eye irritation lasts for a while, talk with the doctor.

- Wash your hands before and after use.
- Clean affected part before use. Make sure to dry well.
- Use only mild soaps or cleansing lotions free of soap for facial cleaning.
- Put a thin layer on the affected skin and rub in gently.
- To gain the most benefit, do not miss doses.
- Use as you have been told, even if your signs get better.
- Do not use coverings (bandages, dressings) unless told to do so by the doctor.
- Makeup may be used after the skin has dried.

Foam:

- Shake well before use.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Put on a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not put on 2 doses or extra doses.

How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

All products:

- Store at room temperature. Do not freeze.
- Store in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.

- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

Cream:

- Store this product on its side.

Gel:

- If using the pump product, throw away any part not used 8 weeks after opening.

Foam:

- Protect from heat or open flame. Do not puncture or burn even if it seems empty.
- Throw away any part not used after 8 weeks.

General drug facts

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else's drugs.
- Keep a list of all your drugs (prescription, natural products,

vitamins, OTC) with you. Give this list to your doctor.

- Talk with the doctor before starting any new drug, including prescription or OTC, natural products, or vitamins.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This information should not be used to decide whether or not to take this medicine or any other medicine. Only the healthcare provider has the knowledge and training to decide which medicines are right for a specific patient. This information does not endorse any medicine as safe, effective, or approved for treating any patient or health condition. This is only a brief summary of general information about this medicine. It does NOT include all information about the possible uses, directions, warnings, precautions, interactions, adverse effects, or risks that may apply to this medicine. This information is not specific medical advice and does not replace information you receive from the healthcare provider. You must talk with the healthcare provider for complete information about the risks and benefits of using this medicine.

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If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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