Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Bexarotene (Topical

This information from UpToDate® Lexidrug™ 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

Targretin

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat a type of lymphoma that affects the skin.

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

- If you have an allergy to bexarotene or any other part of this drug.
- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If you are pregnant or may be pregnant. Do not take this drug if you are pregnant.
- 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?

- 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.
- Do not use this drug with insect repellents that have N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide (DEET).
- You may get sunburned more easily. Avoid sun, sunlamps, and tanning beds. Use sunscreen and wear clothing and eyewear that protects you from the sun.
- Talk with your doctor before you use other drugs or products on your skin. This includes soaps.
- Talk with your doctor before you take products that have vitamin A in them.
- If you drink grapefruit juice or eat grapefruit often, talk with your doctor.
- Do not scratch the affected area.
- This drug may cause harm if swallowed. If this drug is swallowed, call a doctor or poison control center right away.
- People using this drug may have skin reactions where this drug is used. These reactions may include burning, irritation, itching, redness, or scaling. If these reactions get very bad, a break from using this drug may be needed as told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- Call your doctor right away if you have a skin reaction that bothers you or if the reaction makes it hard to keep putting this drug on. Call your doctor right away if you have a skin reaction that causes problems with daily living.
- If your sex partner is pregnant, may be pregnant, or can get pregnant, always use a condom during sex. Use a condom during treatment and for at least 1 month after treatment ends.
- If your sex partner gets pregnant while you take this drug or within 1 month after your last dose, call your doctor right away.

- Use of this drug during pregnancy may cause birth defects or death of the unborn baby. You will need to have a pregnancy test to show that you are NOT pregnant before starting this drug. Talk with the doctor.
- A pregnancy test will be done every month during treatment with this drug.
- Use 2 kinds of birth control 1 month before starting this drug, during treatment, and for at least 1 month after the last dose.
- If you get pregnant while taking this drug or within 1 month after your last dose, call your doctor right away.

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.
- Signs of infection like fever, chills, very bad sore throat, ear or sinus pain, cough, more sputum or change in color of sputum, pain with passing urine, mouth sores, or wound that will not heal.
- A burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.
- Swelling.
- Swollen gland.

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 any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

- Headache.

- Sweating a lot.
- Feeling tired or weak.

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.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at https://www.fda.gov/medwatch.

How is this drug best taken?

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

- Do not take this drug by mouth. Use on your skin only.
- Do not put this drug on or near the eyes, nostrils, mouth, lips, vagina, tip of the penis, rectum, or anus. If you get this drug in any of these areas, rinse with water right away.
- Wash your hands before and after use. If your hand is the treated area, do not wash your hand after use.
- Put on affected part only.
- Avoid putting on healthy skin.
- Let gel dry before covering with clothing.
- Put the cap back on after you are done using your dose.
- Wait 20 minutes after bathing before putting on.
- Do not bathe, shower, or swim for 3 hours after putting on.
- Do not cover with dressings.
- Use as you have been told, even if your signs get better.
- If you are able to get pregnant and have menstrual periods, start taking this drug on the second or third day of a normal menstrual period.

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

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 at the same time or extra doses.

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

- Store at room temperature.
- Protect from heat or open flame.
- Protect from light.
- 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.

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.
- 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.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. 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 generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of this information is governed by the Terms of Use, available at https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/clinical-effectiveness-terms.

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If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

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

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