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PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Tretinoin (Topical)

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

Altreno; Atralin; Avita; Refissa; Renova; Renova Pump; Retin-A; Retin-A Micro; Retin-A Micro Pump; Tretin-X [DSC]

## Brand Names: Canada

Retin-A; Retin-A Micro; Stieva-A

## What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat pimples (acne).

## What do I need to tell the doctor BEFORE my child takes this drug?

- If your child has an allergy to this drug or any part of this drug.
- If your child is allergic to any drugs like this one or any other drugs, foods, or other substances. Tell the doctor about the allergy and what signs your child had, like rash; hives; itching; shortness of breath; wheezing; cough; swelling of face, lips, tongue, or throat; or any other signs.
- If your child is taking any drugs that may make the skin more sensitive to light. There are many drugs that can do this. Ask your child's doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.
- If your child has a sunburn or other skin problems.
- If your child has eczema or your child's skin is sensitive to light.
- If your child is pregnant or may be pregnant.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

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

## **What are some things I need to know or do while my child takes this drug?**

- Tell all of your child's health care providers that your child is taking this drug. This includes your child's doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- It may take several weeks to see the full effects.
- Do not use more than what your doctor told you to use. Do not use more often or longer than what you were told. Doing any of these things may raise the chance of very bad side effects.
- Do not put on sunburned skin.
- Do not put on cuts, scrapes, or damaged skin.
- Practice good skin care and avoid the sun.
- Your child may get sunburned more easily. Avoid lots of sun, sunlamps, and tanning beds. Use sunscreen and dress your child in clothing and eyewear that protects him/her from the sun.
- Some weather conditions may irritate the skin. Talk with the doctor.
- Use of other skin products while using this drug may cause more irritation.
- Talk with your child's doctor before you use other drugs or products on your child's skin.
- Your child may use make-up unless your child's doctor has told your child not to. If your child will be using make-up, have your child clean the area to be treated before putting this drug on.
- This drug may cause harm if swallowed. If this drug is swallowed, call a doctor or poison control center right away.

### **If your child is pregnant or breast-feeding a baby:**

- This drug may cause harm to the unborn baby if your child takes it during pregnancy. If your child is pregnant or gets pregnant while taking this drug, call the doctor right away.
- Tell the doctor if your child is breast-feeding a baby. You will need to talk about any risks to the baby.

## **What are some side effects that I need to call my child's 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 child's doctor or get medical help right away if your child has 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.
- Skin reaction that is very bad, bothers you, or does not go away.

## **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 child's doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother your child or do not go away:

- Feeling of warmth.
- Stinging.
- Change in color of skin.
- Some skin reactions may happen with this drug. These include dry skin, redness, swelling, blisters, and peeling. If these skin reactions happen, talk with your child's doctor. Your child's doctor may want your child to stop using this drug for some time, change how much your child uses, or change how often your child uses this drug.

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

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

## **How is this drug best given?**

Give this drug as ordered by your child's doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

### **All products:**

- Do not give by mouth. Use on your child's skin only. Keep out of your child's mouth, nose, and eyes (may burn).
- If this drug gets in any of these areas, have your child rinse well with water.
- Some products are to be used at bedtime. For some products it does not matter. Check with the pharmacist about how to use this drug.
- Wash your hands before and after use.
- Wash affected skin and pat dry.
- You may need to wait 20 to 30 minutes before use. Check with the pharmacist about how to use this drug.
- Put a thin layer on the affected skin and rub in gently.

### **Gel:**

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

## **What do I do if my child misses a dose?**

- Skip the missed dose and go back to your child's 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.
- 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.

### **Gel:**

- Protect from heat or open flame.

### **Pump:**

- Store upright with the cap on.

## **General drug facts**

- If your child's symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your child's doctor.
- Do not share your child's drug with others and do not give anyone else's drug to your child.
- Keep a list of all your child's drugs (prescription, natural products, vitamins, OTC) with you. Give this list to your child's doctor.
- Talk with your child's doctor before giving your child 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.

## Last Reviewed Date

2018-09-25

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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](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

Tretinoin (Topical) - Last updated on November 7, 2019

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