

Accutane Information Sheet (Female)

Accutane is a strong medication that is used in the treatment of nodulo-cystic acne and in patient who have been unresponsive to “conservative treatment regimens. **Accutane can cause severe birth defects if it is taken when a woman is pregnant.** It is important that all females understand that it is imperative that they **not get pregnant** while on this medication. If a female is sexually active she must use **two** forms of birth control while on Accutane. Furthermore, she must understand that **no form of birth control is 100 percent reliable.** Because of this, females will be required to get regular blood or urine pregnancy tests while on Accutane. The doctor must be completely sure that you are not pregnant before starting the Accutane.

In order to be placed on Accutane, you must

1. Use two forms of effective birth control (contraception) for at least one month before starting the Accutane if you are sexually active.
2. Birth control must be continued for the entire time you are on Accutane and for one month after.

If you become pregnant while on Accutane, you must immediately stop the Accutane and notify the doctor. You should **continue pregnancy prevention measures** for at **least one month** after you discontinue Accutane.

Side Effects -Accutane is a vitamin A derivative that will “dry up” the oil glands in your skin. As expected these side effects can include:

***Dry skin - dry lips with chapping and fissuring, dry eyes,** etc. Some patients get such dry skin that they develop a form of **eczema** characterized by itchy red scaly spots forming most commonly on the arms.

***Joint Aches** – Mild to moderate joint aches and pains may be experienced during the course.

***Dry Eyes** - If you wear **contacts**, you may not be able to tolerate wearing them due to the dryness and irritation of the eyes. Certainly you must avoid wearing contact lenses while you sleep.

***Nosebleeds** can occur in some patients. Most side effects will resolve within a few days or weeks of stopping the Accutane.

***Temporary hair thinning** or hair loss (persistent hair loss has rarely been reported). This can occur during or within a few months of stopping the Accutane.

***Photosensitivity** is another side effect of Accutane that must be remembered. Because you will be more prone to developing sunburn it is imperative to wear protective clothing, sunscreens, and avoid excess sun exposure or severe burns can occur.

***Decreased night vision** can occasionally occur characterized by blurring or fuzziness – this should be mild, temporary and intermittent. If you experience significant vision change – you must notify our clinic.

Waxing to remove facial or body hair is prohibited during your course of Accutane and for 1 month after discontinuing.

Piercings – **Do not get any piercings** during or within 6 months of finishing the Accutane course.

Adverse reactions:

Should any of the following problems occur **you must immediately stop Accutane and call the doctor:**

***Severe flaring of acne** with tender inflamed cystic lesions (only mild flaring should occur)

***Headaches, nausea, vomiting, blurred vision**

***Changes in mood leading to feelings of depression or suicidal ideation**

*Severe **stomach pain**, diarrhea, rectal bleeding

***Yellowing** of the skin or eyes and/or dark urine

***Widespread skin rash** or itching

*Unusual **bruising**

***“Ingrown” nails or swelling/tenderness of the skin around your nails** - If you develop– notify the clinic since Accutane can trigger this – early intervention will help prevent severe ingrown nail and/or infection.

Inflammatory bowel disease/Chron’s and Accutane – The current literature confirms that **there is not** a connection between Accutane and these particular bowel disorders.

You must realize that when you take any medication – there are risks of adverse events. Serious adverse events are uncommon or rare with Accutane.

You must **avoid alcohol and vitamin A** supplements.

Other Pointers:

- Accutane should be **taken with meals**.
- Moisturize your skin two or three times a day with Cetaphil or **CereVe** Cream (Cream is better than lotion).
- Use **Aquaphor** ointment or **Vaseline** based ointment for the lips
- Let the doctor know if you break out in a rash such as eczema – and you may be started on a steroid cream
- Take **Vitamin E (800 IU per day)** to help the dryness of lips and nose.
- If the lips get severely chapped or fissured - let the doctor know and you may be started on a prescription topical medication.
- If the nose is dry or bleeding - use Ocean or Ayr saline nasal spray to moisturize the nose during the day and paint the nose with Vaseline at bedtime.

Accutane can potentially put nodulo-cystic acne into remission. Some people will require two courses of Accutane to obtain the proper results. You can expect to be placed on Accutane for about 6 months.

*****ACCUTANE WILL NOT BE REFILLED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES IF LABWORK IS NOT DONE.**

Note: This is not a comprehensive information sheet. If you desire complete drug information, contact the pharmacist or refer to the “package insert”.