

About your medicine

Your doctor has prescribed acitretin for you.

What is this medicine used for?

Acitretin is used to help relieve and control severe skin disorders, such as severe psoriasis. It works by allowing normal growth and development of the skin.

This medicine is also used for other conditions, including the management of skin conditions, as determined by your doctor.

How should I take this medicine?

Acitretin is available in the form of capsules. Take this medicine as directed by your doctor.

Take this medicine with meals as it is best absorbed with food.

What should I do if I forget a dose?

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose.

Do not double the next dose to make up for the missed dose.

What possible side effects may it cause?

Certain side effects of this medicine are not unusual and may even disappear during treatment. If any of the following effects persist or are severe, consult your doctor.

- Red, cracked and sore lips. This can be relieved by applying petroleum jelly or a lip moisturiser.
- Irritated and dry eyes. If you wear contact lenses, use of eyedrops or artificial tears should help prevent this.
- Dry skin, sometimes with peeling. Relieve by applying a moisturizer.
- Dry mouth and nose. In extreme cases, some nose bleeding may occur.

The following uncommon side effects may occasionally occur. Consult your doctor if any of them becomes a problem.

- severe headache
- backache, back stiffness
- temporary hair loss
- nausea
- sensitivity to sunlight which may result in a severe sunburn - avoid excessive exposure to sun
- yellowing of the skin or eyes
- dark urine
- unusual fatigue
- blurred vision
- mood changes (rare)

Your doctor will also perform blood tests (cholesterol/triglycerides and liver function test) before you start the treatment and at least once during the course of treatment. This is to monitor for any abnormalities as acitretin can cause the level of cholesterol and triglycerides in your blood to increase and may occasionally cause raised liver enzymes.

What precautions should I take?

- *Acitretin has been reported to cause serious harm to unborn babies when taken during pregnancy. Women who are pregnant, who intend to become pregnant, or who are breast-feeding should tell their doctors before taking this medication.*
- *You must use strict birth control for at least 1 month before you start acitretin, and for the whole time you are taking acitretin. In addition, since it is not known how long pregnancy should be avoided after treatment stops, you should plan not to become pregnant for at least 2 or 3 years after you stop taking acitretin.*
- Before you start taking your course of acitretin, you should wait until the 2nd or 3rd day of your next menstrual period. If you suspect you are pregnant, do not start the acitretin at all.
- *If you are already taking acitretin and discover that you have become pregnant, stop taking the medicine immediately and tell your doctor.*
- It is not known whether acitretin passes into the breast milk. However, use of *acitretin should not be used during breast-feeding* because it may cause unwanted effects in nursing babies. *You also should plan not to breast-feed for at least 2 or 3 years after you stop taking acitretin.*
- Inform your doctor if you have diabetes, liver or kidney disease; high fat levels in your blood; inflammation of pancreas or any allergies, or if you receive phototherapy.
- Do not donate blood while you take acitretin and at least 3 years after you stop taking it. This is to prevent the possibility of a pregnant patient receiving the blood.

PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

- Limit your exposure to sunlight. Use a sunscreen product and wear protective clothing when you are exposed to direct sunlight.
- Do not drink alcohol while using acitretin and for 2 months after stopping it because alcohol causes this drug to stay in the body longer.
- Do not take vitamin preparations containing high doses of vitamin A.
- Do not take tetracyclines (tetracycline, doxycycline, minocycline) as these antibiotics increase the risk of high pressure in the head leading to headaches, nausea and vomiting. Inform your doctor if you are taking other medication, especially, methotrexate.
- Do not allow anyone else to take this medication.

How do I store this medicine?

- Keep this medicine away from heat and direct sunlight in a cool, dry place, out of reach of children
- Do not keep this medicine with other medications in the same container. Keep each medicine separately in labeled containers.

When in doubt, consult your doctor or pharmacist:

National Skin Centre
1 Mandalay Road, Singapore 308205.
Tel: 63508454

ACITRETIN

