

# ISOTRETINOIN (Acne)

*Oratane*<sup>®</sup> / *Roaccutane*<sup>®</sup>



KK Women's and  
Children's Hospital

SingHealth

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## Patient Information Leaflet

This leaflet answers some common questions about Isotretinoin. It does not contain all the available information. It also does not take the place of talking to your doctor or pharmacist.

### What is Isotretinoin used for?

Isotretinoin is a retinoid, which is a type of Vitamin A. This drug is used to treat and cure acne. The drug needs to be taken for a specified length of time, which will be explained to you by your doctor.

### When should I take the medication?

Isotretinoin is recommended to be taken with food and is usually taken once or twice daily.

### How should it be taken?

Swallow capsules whole with a full glass of water.

#### ***Other ways if you are unable to swallow whole capsule:***

- ❑ Pierce the capsule with a large-gauge needle and squeeze the contents onto food for immediate consumption. It is best to use food with high fat content (e.g. peanut butter, cheese, chicken noodle soup broth, pudding, or ice cream) to help absorb the medicine.
  
- ❑ Chew the capsule to empty the contents. Shell of capsule can then be swallowed or spit out.

### What should I do if I miss a dose?

If you miss a dose or forget to take your medicine, take it as soon as you can. If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the dose you missed and take your next dose at the usual time. Do not take a double dose to make up for the missed dose.

### Special instructions

- ❑ **Warning:** Do not become pregnant when you are taking this drug and do not breastfeed. This drug can cause fetal abnormalities. Please use effective contraception for one month before, during and for one month after treatment.
  
- ❑ Do not take any other medications or herbal products without first consulting your doctor. Please inform your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any other medicines, especially antifungals or antibiotics. Some medication may reduce its efficacy, or increase its toxicity.
  
- ❑ Do not take multivitamins that contain vitamin A or beta-carotene. These vitamins may make the side effects of isotretinoin worse.

- Avoid waxing, dermabrasion or electrolysis. The skin is more fragile, so wounds and cuts take longer to heal.
- Do not donate blood during therapy or for at least one month after treatment with isotretinoin.

### **What side effects can this medicine cause? What can I do about them?**

- Fever and headache may be common during the first few doses but fever should be transient. Paracetamol can be useful for this.
- Other common side effects include dry or peeling skin, cracked lips and dry eyes. Moisturisers and lip balm can be helpful when the skin and lips are cracked and dry. Lubricant eye drops are also helpful if the eyes become dry and irritated.
- This medicine may also cause the skin to become more sensitive to sunlight; avoid exposure to sunlight, wear protective clothing (long sleeves and pants), wide-brimmed hats and apply sunscreen liberally.
- Other less common side effects may include increase in triglycerides levels, calcium levels and reduction in blood counts.
- Mood changes and feeling of tiredness, lethargy may occur.

Please inform your doctor if you experience any other side effects or if the side effects become severe and bothersome.

### **Storage**

Do not store above 25°C and protect from light.