

## Instructions for Acne Medications

Acne is caused by four main factors: excess oil production, clogged follicles not clearing, bacteria, and inflammation. Each of the treatments outlined below help treat one or more of these common causes.

**Over-the-Counter Washes:** Benzoyl Peroxide (BP) is stronger than Salicylic Acid (SA) but not always tolerated well. Try BP first and SA next if it is too irritating. Only use one at a time.

- **Topical Benzoyl Peroxide (BP ≤5%):** Apply cleanser to affected area once daily; leave on for a few minutes then wash off. Benzoyl Peroxide will bleach clothing, towels, pillow cases, etc.
  - Recommendations: [CeraVe Acne Foaming Cleanser](#) or [Neutrogena Clear Pore Cleanser/Mask](#)
- **Salicylic Acid:** Apply cleanser to affected area once daily; leave on for a few minutes then wash off
  - Recommendations: [CeraVe SA Renewing Cleanser](#), [Neutrogena Oil-Free Acne Wash](#) or [La Roche Posay Effaclar Medicated Gel Cleanser](#)

If you get dry/peeling/irritated from the wash, use non-comedogenic moisturizer like [CeraVe cream](#). Some skin dryness is expected when starting any acne medication. If more irritation develops, decrease how often (and/or how much) the medicine is used.

### Topical Retinoid (Vitamin A) Medications:

- Apply tretinoin/tazarotene/adapalene/differin \_\_\_\_\_%\_\_ to your whole face daily at bedtime. This medication works best as a field treatment, not as spot treatment. Apply in the evening, at least 15-20 minutes after you wash your face, and leave on overnight.
- Please start using this medication 3 nights per week and increase as tolerated to nightly. To start, squeeze a “pea-sized” amount of the medication onto your palm, then mix it with 3-4 “peas” of your favorite cream (e.g., [CeraVe cream](#)), then dab the mixture over all the areas that you get acne (e.g., forehead, chin, cheeks), then go back and rub it in so that you get an even application. Over time, increase slowly (over a several week period) to using 7 nights per week and then slowly reduce the amount of cream that you’re diluting it with. The goal is to use it NIGHTLY FULL STRENGTH, but you have to ease into it slowly to let your skin get used to it.
- Note: tretinoin/tazarotene is inactivated by the sun so do not apply in the morning. Adapalene/differin are not unaffected by sun.

### Other Topical Medication:

- Apply \_\_\_\_\_ to the affected areas of the face / body \_\_\_\_\_ time(s) per day
- Apply in the:  morning  evening
- You can apply sunscreen over the top of this medication if needed.



○ Oral Medications:

- Medicine: \_\_\_\_\_ take \_\_\_\_\_ pill(s) \_\_\_\_\_ times per day
- Remember to take pills with a full glass of water and at least 1-2 hours prior to lying down. It's OK to take with food but for doxycycline or minocycline, avoid taking with dairy products or calcium if possible. Do not take doxycycline or minocycline with iron pills or vitamins containing iron, antacids, calcium supplements, and laxatives.
- If you are a female of childbearing age, it is important NOT to get pregnant while taking oral acne medications and to STOP using any topical acne medications if you suspect that you might be pregnant.
- Any additional Instructions: \_\_\_\_\_

Madeline Krauss, M.D. • Pamela Norden M.D. • Ellen Lacomis M.D.

Michael Bosworth, M.D. • Deborah Goddard, M.D. • Rebecca Droms, M.D. • Jessica Suzanne Mosher M.D.

1 Washington Street, Suite 401 Wellesley Hills Ma 02481

Phone: 781-416-3500 Fax: 781-416-3505