



Spirolactone

What is Spirolactone and how do I take it?

- Spirolactone (Aldactone) is a diuretic (water pill) that is used to treat acne due to its anti-androgen (anti-testosterone) effects.
- Spirolactone is not FDA-approved for treatment of acne, although it is commonly used in women for this purpose. It is particularly helpful when women have “hormonal distribution” acne, which occurs along the lower face and flares with menstrual cycle.
- Spirolactone works most effectively when it is taken every day as prescribed. Everyone misses a dose occasionally but missing many doses will negatively affect its efficacy.
- Spirolactone often takes 2-3 months to work and about 6 months to reach peak effect; try to be patient.
- Spirolactone usually does not cause stomach upset, but if it does it can be taken with food.
- **Spirolactone should not be taken if you are pregnant or planning to get pregnant.** It can negatively affect the development of a male fetus’ genitalia. Spirolactone should also *not* be taken if you are breastfeeding.
- **Spirolactone should not be taken if you have heart failure or kidney disease.**

Possible side effects

- Spirolactone is usually well tolerated, but just as with any medication, side effects are possible. Side effects include irregular menses, midcycle spotting, breast tenderness, headaches, dizziness, frequent urination and abdominal pain. Very rarely, it can cause a rash, liver, kidney or blood problems. Questions have been raised about whether this drug can cause breast cancer or thyroid cancer; to date, no link has been shown. It is known that the drug can stimulate breast tissue because of this it is not recommended in women with an immediate family history of breast cancer.
- Spirolactone can increase blood potassium levels in patients with kidney disease. While on treatment, please avoid salt substitutes or large amounts of coconut milk as they contain heavy amounts of potassium. Women over the age of 40 will be asked to get potassium level checked every 6 months to 1 year to confirm levels are within normal limits
- You should stop taking Spirolactone and call the office if any of the following occur: a sudden severe rash, severe or daily headaches, vomiting, severe abdominal pain, visual changes, unusual bleeding or bruising or jaundice (yellowing of eyes and skin).

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