



Provincial Health Services Authority

For the Patient: Alitretinoin
Other names: TOCTINO®

- **Alitretinoin** (a li tre' ti noyn) is a drug that is used to treat some types of cancer. It is a capsule that you take by mouth.
- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or **allergic reaction** to alitretinoin, tretinoin (all-trans retinoic acid, ATRA, VESANOID®), isotretinoin (ACCUTANE®, ISOTREX®), acitretin (SORIATANE®), or vitamin A preparations before taking alitretinoin.
- Before receiving alitretinoin you will be asked to **review** information on the TOCTINO® Pregnancy Prevention Program, a program run by the manufacturer of alitretinoin.
- Alitretinoin may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. Severe birth defects to the unborn baby may occur. **Two** forms of reliable **birth control** must be used at the same time during treatment and for one month after your last dose. Tell your doctor right away if you become pregnant. Do not breastfeed during treatment.
- If you are a woman and are able to bear children, a blood test to determine whether you are **pregnant** will be taken before starting alitretinoin treatment, every month during treatment, and for one month after you stop treatment.
- Alitretinoin may affect **fertility** in men. If you plan to have children, discuss this with your doctor before being treated with alitretinoin.
- **Blood tests** may be taken regularly during treatment. The dose and timing of your treatment may be changed based on the test results and/or other side effects.
- **Do not donate blood** while you are taking alitretinoin and for one month after your last dose of alitretinoin.
- It is important to **take** alitretinoin exactly as directed by your doctor. Make sure you understand the directions.
- **Take** alitretinoin with food, preferably with a main meal at the same time each day.
- Do not chew or crush alitretinoin capsules. **Swallow whole.**

- If you **miss a dose** of alitretinoin, take it as soon as you can if it is within 12 hours of the missed dose. If it is more than 12 hours since your missed dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times. Do NOT take a double dose to make up for the missed dose.
- If you **vomit** the dose of alitretinoin within 30 minutes of taking it, repeat the dose. Let your doctor know as a medication to prevent nausea may be required for future doses.
- Other drugs such as ketoconazole (NIZORAL®), tetracycline (ACHROMYCIN V®), methotrexate (RHEUMATREX®), and some birth control pills may **interact** with alitretinoin. Tell your doctor if you are taking these or any other drugs as you may need extra blood tests or your dose may need to be changed. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start or stop taking any other drugs.
- Vitamin A may increase the side effects of alitretinoin (hypervitaminosis A). **Do NOT take** vitamin A supplements while being treated with alitretinoin. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start taking any new vitamin supplements, including multivitamins.
- The **drinking of alcohol** (in small amounts) does not appear to affect the safety or usefulness of alitretinoin.
- **Store** alitretinoin capsules out of the reach of children, at room temperature, away from heat, light, and moisture.
- **Tell** doctors, dentists, and other health professionals that you are being treated with alitretinoin before you receive any treatment from them.

Side effects are listed in the following table in the order in which they may occur. Tips to help manage the side effects are included.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Nausea does not usually occur with alitretinoin.	
Headache may sometimes occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 4-6 hours if needed, to a maximum of 4 g (4000 mg) per day. • Severe headache that is not controlled with acetaminophen OR headache which occurs together with nausea and vomiting or changes in eyesight should be reported to your doctor immediately.

SIDE EFFECTS	MANAGEMENT
Eye problems , such as dry eyes, eyelid swelling, decreased night vision, and blurry vision may rarely occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use caution when driving or operating machinery. • Tell your doctor at your next visit, especially if your eye problems do not go away or get worse. • Eye changes which occur together with a headache should be reported to your doctor immediately.
Increase in cholesterol or triglycerides (one of the types of fat in the blood) may commonly occur.	<p>Discuss this with your doctor if you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A history of heart disease. • High blood pressure. • High cholesterol or triglycerides. <p>You may need to have your cholesterol level checked a few months after starting alitretinoin.</p>
Your skin may sunburn more easily than usual.	<p>Refer to <i>Your Medication Sun Sensitivity and Sunscreens*</i> or the <i>BC Health Guide</i> for more information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After sun exposure, if you have a severe sunburn or skin reaction such as itching, rash, or swelling, contact your doctor.
Hair loss is rare with alitretinoin. If you lose hair, it will grow back once you stop treatment with alitretinoin. Colour and texture may change.	If hair loss is a problem, refer to <i>Resources for Hair Loss and Appearance Changes – Patient Handout</i> .*

*Please ask your nurse or pharmacist for a copy.

STOP TAKING ALITRETINOIN AND SEE YOUR DOCTOR OR GET EMERGENCY HELP IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of an **allergic reaction** (rare) including dizziness, fast heartbeat, face swelling, or breathing problems.
- **Headache** that is not controlled with acetaminophen, or **headache** which occurs together with nausea and vomiting or changes in eyesight.
- **Severe diarrhea**, bloody diarrhea, rectal bleeding, or stomach cramping or pain.

SEE YOUR DOCTOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (DURING OFFICE HOURS) IF YOU HAVE:

- Signs of **hypervitaminosis A** such as nausea, vomiting, bone pain, headache, dry skin, lip or mouth dryness or swelling, and rash.
- **Changes in mood** or feelings of sadness that are not usual for you.
- Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-coloured stools.

CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CONTINUE OR BOTHER YOU:

- Dry lips or dry mouth.
- Skin rash, redness, or dry skin.
- Tiredness or lack of energy.
- Ringing in the ears.
- Stomach upset, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.
- Swelling of the hands or feet.
- Muscle or joint pain, back pain, or pain in arms or legs.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Flushing.
- For patients with diabetes: uncontrolled blood sugars.

REPORT ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS TO YOUR DOCTOR
