

**For the Patient: Tretinoin**

Other names: All-trans retinoic acid, ATRA,
VESANOID®

- **Tretinoin** (TRET-i-noyn) is a drug that is used to treat some kinds of leukemia. It is a capsule that you take by mouth.
- Tell your doctor if you have ever had an unusual or **allergic reaction** to acitretin (SORIATANE®), isotretinoin (ACCUTANE®, ISOTREX®) or vitamin A preparations before taking tretinoin.
- For women: tretinoin may harm the baby if used during pregnancy. Severe birth defects or death 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 treatment with tretinoin is stopped. Tell your doctor right away if you become pregnant. Do not breast feed during treatment.
- It is important to **take** tretinoin exactly as directed by your doctor. Make sure you understand the directions. Tretinoin should be taken with food and a glass of water or juice.
- If you **miss a dose** of tretinoin, take it as soon as you can if it is within 6 hours of the missed dose. If it is over 6 hours since your missed dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your usual dosing times.
- **Store** tretinoin capsules out of the reach of children, at room temperature, away from heat, light and moisture.
- Other drugs such as ketoconazole (NIZORAL®), chlortetracycline, demeclocycline (DECLOMYCIN®), doxycycline (DOXYCIN®), minocycline (MINOCIN®), tetracycline, and birth control pills may **interact** with tretinoin. 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 taking any new drugs.
- Vitamin A may increase the side effects of tretinoin (hypervitaminosis A). **Do NOT** take Vitamin A supplements while being treated with tretinoin. 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 tretinoin.

- **Tell** doctors or dentists that you are being treated with tretinoin 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 may occur during treatment with tretinoin. Most people have little or no nausea.	You may be given a prescription for antinausea drug(s) to take at home. It is easier to prevent nausea than treat it once it has occurred, so follow directions closely. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink plenty of liquids. • Eat and drink often in small amounts. • Try the ideas in <i>Food Choices to Help Control Nausea</i>.*
Dry skin may occur.	Apply a moisturiser to dry skin several times a day.
Dry lips and mouth may occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use lip balm for dry lips several times a day. • Try lemon drops, sugarless gum, ice chips, or artificial saliva for dry mouth.
Retinoic acid syndrome may occur during tretinoin treatment. The signs and symptoms include fever, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, weight gain, discomfort, pain or tightness in chest, bone pain, and leg swelling.	Call your doctor immediately if you have more than one of these signs and symptoms.
Fever may occur alone during treatment with tretinoin.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) every 3-4 hours. • Fever which occurs together with shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, weight gain, discomfort, pain or tightness in chest, bone pain, or leg swelling should be reported to your doctor immediately.
Headache may occur during treatment with tretinoin.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take acetaminophen (e.g., TYLENOL®) to decrease or stop headache. • 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
Tiredness and lack of energy may occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not drive a car or operate machinery if you are feeling tired. • Try the ideas in <i>Your Bank to Energy Savings: Helping People with Cancer Handle Fatigue</i>.*
Blood clots can sometimes occur. This is more likely to happen if you have had blood clots before. Signs to watch for include tenderness or hardness over a vein; calf tenderness; sudden onset of cough, chest pain, or shortness of breath.	<p>To help prevent blood clots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep active. • Drink plenty of fluids. • Avoid tight clothing. • Do not sit with your legs crossed at the knees.
Your skin may sunburn more easily than usual.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to <i>Your Medication Sun Sensitivity and Sunscreens*</i> or the <i>BC Health Guide</i> for more information. • After sun exposure, if you have a severe sunburn or skin reaction such as itching, rash, or swelling, contact your doctor.
Hair loss does not occur with tretinoin.	

***Please ask your chemotherapy nurse or pharmacist for a copy.**

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

- Signs of **retinoic acid syndrome** such as fever, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, weight gain, discomfort, pain or tightness in chest, bone pain, or leg swelling.
- Signs of a **blood clot** such as tenderness or hardness over a vein, calf swelling and tenderness, sudden onset of cough, chest pain, or shortness of breath.
- **Severe headache** that is not controlled with acetaminophen or **headache** which occurs together with nausea and vomiting or changes in eyesight.

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.
- Signs of **heart problems** such as shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, swelling of feet, or lower legs.
- Signs of **liver problems** such as yellow eyes or skin, white or clay-coloured stools.
- Signs of **kidney problems** such as lower back or side pain, swelling of feet or lower legs, numbness or tingling in feet or hands.
- Signs of **high blood calcium** such as loss of appetite, confusion, excessive thirst, or fatigue.

