

After isotretinoin treatment for acne



Information for patients

Dermatology



PROUD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

SHEFFIELD TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST



Why have I been given this leaflet?

You have been given this leaflet as you have now stopped taking Isotretinoin. This leaflet aims to answer any questions you may have now that your treatment has finished.

How long do the side-effects of Isotretinoin last?

The side-effects should start getting better as soon as you stop taking Isotretinoin. However, the drug remains in your system for a month, so be aware that your acne may carry on getting better for some time after you stop taking it.

Women must remember to continue using two forms of contraception for one month after stopping Isotretinoin. If you become pregnant whilst Isotretinoin is still in your system, there is an extremely high risk that your baby will be born with severe and serious birth defects. There is also an increased risk of suffering a miscarriage.

Will my acne return?

For most people, acne does not return after Isotretinoin has been discontinued. However, you may still experience the occasional spot. Try to use skin cleansers and moisturisers that are non-oily. Use skin care products that are labelled 'non-comedogenic'.

If your acne does return, usually it will not be as severe as it was before, and will be controlled with the kind of treatments that you can apply directly to your skin. You can buy some of these (for example Benzyl Peroxide) over the counter.

There are other treatments that your GP can prescribe. Often, antibiotics that did not work before may now clear your acne. See your GP to discuss this.

What if my acne returns, and is as severe as it was before?

This only occurs in a small number of people. You should discuss the situation with your GP. As stated previously, antibiotics may now work. However, if they don't work, then you may need another course of Isotretinoin, and your GP will have to refer you back to the Dermatologist.

Will my acne scars fade?

There are no treatments that totally remove scars. The good news is that red, prominent scars often fade with time. Raised scars are often helped by simply massaging them for 10 minutes each day.

When considering any treatment, it is important to realise that any procedures (for example chemical peels) carry a risk of scarring in themselves. You may have read lots of claims about treatment for scars on the internet. It is advisable to discuss these treatments with your GP or Dermatologist first.

Is there anything else I should avoid doing?

Do not remove hairs by waxing for at least one month after treatment. Also, do not have any laser treatments on the skin or dermabrasion for 6 months after treatment, as there is a risk of scarring.

Where can I find out more information?

Further information about Isotretinoin can be found on the following website: **www.dermnetnz.org**



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