



DERMATOLOGY
ASSOCIATES OF ITHACA
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TIPS FOR USING SPIRONOLACTONE

Take your medication with a meal if it upsets your stomach. Drink plenty of water. Spironolactone acts as a diuretic. Be patient. It will probably take several weeks before you really notice an improvement to your skin. Let your provider know if you develop any side effects.



DID YOU KNOW?

Spironolactone may pose risks to a developing fetus, so good birth control measures (preferably at least two methods) should be used while on the medication.

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SPIRONOLACTONE

Spironolactone is used to treat many different disorders, from high blood pressure to fluid retention. Although the US Food and Drug Administration does not recognize spironolactone as an acne treatment, it is often prescribed off label to treat hormonally influenced breakouts. Spironolactone is used as an acne treatment for women only. Spironolactone is only available by prescription from your doctor.

HOW IT WORKS

Spironolactone is in a group of drugs classified as anti-androgens. Androgen hormones, like testosterone, are typically thought of as male hormones. But androgens are also present in the female body, although in lower levels. Some women produce more androgen hormones than needed. Anti-androgens like spironolactone block androgen receptors in the body, preventing cells from absorbing androgen hormones. Simply, androgens have been linked to the development of acne.

MORE ABOUT HORMONES AND ACNE

Because of the way spironolactone works, only women whose acne has a hormonal basis will see results with spironolactone. But, for those women with a tendency to develop hormonal acne, the drug can help manage breakouts. Some studies found up to 66% of women who took spironolactone had excellent improvement or complete clearing of the skin. When used in combination with oral contraceptives, this number jumps to 85%, according to one study.

COMMON USAGE DIRECTIONS

When using spironolactone as an acne treatment, the most common dosage is between 50 to 100 mg daily. Many dermatologists start off prescribing lower doses and work up to the target dosage over the course of several weeks. Your doctor will determine the most appropriate dosage for you, depending on your personal situation.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

Side effects with low dose spironolactone aren't as common as with higher doses, but can include irregular menstrual cycle (spotting), breast tenderness, thirst, dry mouth, stomach cramps, vomiting, diarrhea, headache, dizziness, increased blood potassium levels or low blood pressure. Please let your provider know if you are taking potassium supplements or have high blood pressure. It is extremely important to avoid pregnancy while using spironolactone as it can cause severe birth defects. Spironolactone may not be a good choice for you if you have kidney problems, or a history of breast cancer, uterine cancer, or ovarian cancer.

GUIDELINES

Since spironolactone is a potassium-sparing diuretic, you should avoid taking potassium in your supplements or sports drinks and avoid eating too many high potassium foods such as papaya, cantaloupe, prune juice, honeydew melons, bananas, raisins, mangoes, kiwis, oranges, orange juice, tomatoes, tomato juice, white and sweet potatoes, asparagus, pumpkin and Brussels sprouts. Also avoid salt substitutes that use potassium chloride instead of sodium chloride and low-sodium milk products.

