

Experts in Skin & Hair

Post-Isotretinoin Skin Care & Advice

How long do side effects last for?

Isotretinoin stays in your body for around a month, but any side effects tend to rapidly diminish as the dose is reduced or stopped. Women must continue with reliable contraception and avoid pregnancy for one month and must repeat a pregnancy test, if at risk of pregnancy, one month after completion of the course.

Will my acne recur?

It is very unlikely your acne will recur, but you may still experience the odd spot from time to time. By tapering the dose gradually downwards before stopping, you should prevent any post-treatment flare up. You should continue to use non-comedogenic products to cleanse and moisturise. These will be marketed as being suitable for acne prone skin and are non-oily. Make up should also be non-comedogenic and removed at the end of the day with a gentle cleanser.

If minor acne recurs then products like topical antibiotics or benzoyl peroxide or topical retinoid (Vitamin A) on prescription from your doctor may control your skin, even if these did not work before your course of Isotretinoin. Topical Vitamin A products can also be useful for some of the minor marks and scars of past acne, however, your skin may be more sensitive post treatment and you may only be able to tolerate this two to three times weekly.

What do I do if my acne recurs as bad as before?

This only occurs in a small number of people and usually after a considerable period of time has elapsed (many months or more likely years). It is likely that you will require further tablet based treatment, which may include antibiotics, Spironolactone or a repeat course of Isotretinoin.

Will my acne scars fade?

Time is a great healer of the skin. A lot of the redness associated with acne and Isotretinoin treatment fades within a few months and this improves the cosmetic outcome for the majority. Unfortunately, some of the deeper scars will not disappear and may require treatment. There are a number of techniques that range from dermabrasion and skin peels to punch excision and laser resurfacing. These are carried out by cosmetic dermatologists and I would recommend seeing someone that can offer the full range of treatments, as they will be best placed to advise you on the most appropriate treatment.

How should I be looking after my skin going forward?

You should continue to use the right products for acne prone skin as recommended during your treatment. These are marketed as being non-oily or non-comedogenic. Be careful with products that contain SPF and limit these to when you are actually going to be in the sun. Remove make up at the end of the day. Lastly, sugary foods or diets in high in refined carbohydrates (white bread, rice, sugar) may exacerbate your skin, as can smoking and stress, so try and live a balanced life.

