Te Whatu Ora
Health New Zealand
Waitaha Canterbury

ISOTRETINOIN

eye-so-tre-tin-oh-in

What does it do?

Isotretinoin is used to treat acne, and sometimes other skin conditions.

Before you start

- *Isotretinoin* must **not** be used if you are pregnant, or planning to become pregnant, because of a high risk of abnormalities in the developing baby. It is very important to use reliable contraception while taking *isotretinoin* and for 1 month after stopping. Talk with your doctor about your contraceptive options.
- Tell your doctor if you are breastfeeding, or if you have high cholesterol or depression.

How should you take it?

Take *isotretinoin* regularly as directed with food and a glass of water.

What if you forget a dose?

If it is nearly time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and take your next dose at the usual time. Otherwise, take the missed dose as soon as you remember. Do not take two doses at the same time.

Can you take other medicines?

Some medicines available without a prescription may react with *isotretinoin* including:

- products containing vitamin A (including multivitamins)

Tell your pharmacist or doctor about all medicines or treatments that you may be taking, including vitamins, herbal products or recreational drugs.

What side effects might you notice?

Side Effects	Recommended action
Low mood, unusual behaviour or thinking Headache, changes in vision, pounding in one or both ears (may be intracranial hypertension)	Tell your doctor immediately
Dry or irritated skin, lips, eyes, mouth or nose (including nose bleeds)	Use moisturiser, lip balm and eye drops. Tell your health professional if troublesome.
Trouble seeing at night	Take care when driving at night. Tell your doctor if troublesome.
Joint, muscle or bone aches and pains More sensitive to sunlight (sunburn or rash) Hair loss or thinning	Tell your doctor if troublesome

If you notice any other effects, discuss them with your doctor or pharmacist.

Other information:

- Sometimes acne can get worse when you first start *isotretinoin*. Tell your doctor if this is troublesome.
- *Isotretinoin* can make your skin sensitive, so avoid treatments such as waxing, laser or dermabrasion while taking *isotretinoin* and for 3 to 6 months after stopping.
- Protect yourself from too much sunlight while being treated with *isotretinoin*. Always cover up and apply a thick layer of broad spectrum sunscreen (at least SPF 30) when outside. Do not use sunbeds.
- You will need regular blood tests while taking *isotretinoin* to check if it is causing problems with your liver or cholesterol levels.
- Do not donate blood while taking *isotretinoin*, and for 1 month after stopping.