

Isotretinoin also known by brand name Roaccutane in UK.

- It is a vitamin A derivative (retinoid).
- It is effective treatment for severe acne, acne with scarring and acne not responding to oral antibiotics.
- Most patients have significant improvement of acne.
- The course is between 4 to 6 months.
- It is better absorbed with a fatty meal so should be taken after a meal.

How does it work?

- ✓ It decreases the skin's natural oil production - sebum secretion.
- ✓ Shrinks sebaceous glands.
- ✓ Affects production of keratin that causes clogged pores.
- ✓ A reduction in *Propionibacterium acnes* in the hair follicles occurs as a secondary result of decreased nutrients (decrease in sebum).

Side effects

It has some common side effects and some serious side effects that can occur

Dryness of skin, lips and eyes – use lip balm and moisturizer and eye drops if needed.

Nose bleeds may occur if nose is dry.

Increase skin sensitivity to sun- wear sunscreen regularly, avoid direct sun.

Muscle and joint ache can occur especially after exercise.

Liver inflammation may occur- Blood test to monitor it and keep alcohol intake to minimum.

Cholesterol levels may increase because of the drug – blood test to monitor it.

Serious

Depression- Inform doctor if mood is low or mood changes while on medication.

Female patients cannot get pregnant while on medication and up to 1 month after stopping the medication. They are advised on dual method of contraception while on Isotretinoin.