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## **Instructions for Differin, Retin A, Renova, Tazorac, or Avage use**

What is a retinoid? A retinoid is a relative of Vitamin A. It is an excellent treatment for acne because it gradually opens the plugged oil glands that cause whiteheads and blackheads. It is also used in the treatment of sun damaged skin because it increases the rate of normal cell division in the topmost layer of skin. As a result of the increased cell renewal, the epidermis (top layer of skin) becomes thicker and fuller in appearance. In addition, retinoids stimulate collagen synthesis. Collagen is the substance which makes up the dermis (second layer of skin). As the skin ages, the collagen gets thinner and less pliable causing wrinkles to appear. Differin, RetinA, Renova, Tazorac, and Avage are all examples of retinoids.

### How should it be applied?

1. Wash your face with a mild soap before using a retinoid and allow your skin to completely dry before applying it (about 30 minutes). Do not use astringents, drying agents, abrasive scrubs, or harsh soaps while using this medication. The medication is more irritating to damp skin. If you cannot wait that long, blow dry your skin with the lowest setting of your hair dryer.
2. If you are using a moisturizer, apply it before the retinoid. Avoid moisturizers that contain perfume. We recommend Cetaphil, Moisturel, Neutrogena, Cerave, and Purpose products.
3. Use only a "pea-size" drop of the retinoid cream/gel for your entire face. Dab it on your forehead, cheeks, and chin then rub in gently. Be especially careful around your mouth and eyes, only using minimal amounts and lightly tapping with fingertips as the skin is thinner here.
4. Your skin needs time to acclimate to the medication so it is necessary to begin very slowly to avoid side effects of redness, itching, peeling or tenderness. We recommend the following schedule:
  - a. Apply at bedtime every third night for two weeks. If no side effects then:
  - b. Apply every other night for two weeks. If no side effects then:
  - c. Apply every night (some people can never use it this often)
5. While using a retinoid, apply sunscreen with spf 15 or higher before going outdoors. Your skin may become more sensitive to sunlight and burn more easily.
6. While using a retinoid, avoid waxing as bruising may occur. If you must wax, discontinue the retinoid for one week prior.

**NOTE:** If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, talk with us about your special circumstances.