



Differin Gel Acne Medication Is Now Available Over-the-Counter

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The worst kind of four-letter word in our opinion? Acne. And if you're reading this, chances are you've probably muttered a few *other* choice four-letter words under your breath every time a new zit creeps up. For some of us, monitoring our diet, exercising regularly, and keeping stress levels low helps ward off breakouts. But for others, time-consuming derm appointments and tricky trial-and-error regimens are most likely the name of the game, unfortunately. That's why when learned about a super popular treatment called Differin, which is the first retinoid to be made available over the counter, we were immediately intrigued. If you're not familiar with the drug, we had a few of the pros give us the who, what, when, where, and whys on everything you need to know about the next-level gel, below.

What is it? "Differin 0.1% gel, otherwise known as adapalene, has been a popular retinoid prescription medication since the '90s," says Dr. Sejal Shah of SmarterSkin Dermatology. "It's the first retinoid available for over-the-

counter use to treat acne. It's a big deal since the only acne medications approved by the FDA for OTC use for years have been benzoyl peroxide, salicylic acid, and sulfur." Of the two formulations available (0.1% and 0.3%) only the lower concentration is currently approved for OTC use.

What makes it different? "It works better and faster than any retinol, and it's also a serious multitasker," says Dr. Rachel Nazarian of Schweiger Dermatology Group. "It's shown to be crazy effective with treating blackheads, whiteheads, and even cystic lesions of acne."

Who can use it? "I have all my patients with every type of acne use some kind of retinoid, so it's a really versatile treatment for everyone," says **Dr. Ava Shamban**, dermatologist and founder of SKINxFIVE. "You can use it no matter your skin type, but you may need to change your cleansing routing or add on a moisturizer to avoid irritation if your skin is very dry."

How do you use it? "The best way to start treatment is to use it a tiny amount at night just once a week. As long as your skin isn't showing too much irritation, you can gradually increase to nightly use," says Dr. Nazarian.

What are the precautions? "Differin can cause flare-ups for those with sensitive skin conditions like rosacea and eczema," says Dr. Shamban. "Side effects can be mild redness, peeling, and dryness, but that can be addressed with moisturizer or by reducing the frequency of applications until your skin gets used to the treatment."

When is it available? Now at drugstores! But remember there's no such thing as acne magically disappearing overnight. With continued use, in about 4-5 weeks you should see improvement.

<http://www.teenvogue.com/story/differin-gel-acne-medication-available-over-the-counter>