Azelaic acid (Finacea, Skinoren)

Apply the preparation twice each day. Use it on all of the area where your spots occur - not just on each spot.

Wash the area with soap and water, and dry it gently, before applying the treatment.

About azelaic acid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of medicine</th>
<th>A rub-on (topical) skin preparation for acne or rosacea</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used for</td>
<td>Acne; rosacea</td>
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<tr>
<td>Also called</td>
<td>Finacea®; Skinoren®</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available as</td>
<td>Cream or gel</td>
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</tbody>
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Acne is the common cause of spots. Most people with acne are aged between 12 and 25, but some older and younger people are affected too. Small sebaceous glands lie just under your skin surface and make an oil (sebum) that keeps your skin supple and smooth. Tiny pores on your skin allow the sebum to come on to the surface of your skin. In acne, some of these pores become blocked, causing small pimples, blackheads and whiteheads. Azelaic acid skin cream and gel mainly work by unplugging blocked pores.

Azelaic acid is also used for rosacea in adults. Rosacea is a skin condition that usually affects parts of your face such as your nose, cheeks and forehead. It is a condition that can often cause spots.

Before using azelaic acid

Some medicines are not suitable for people with certain conditions, and sometimes a medicine may only be used if extra care is taken. For these reasons, before you start using azelaic acid it is important that your doctor knows:

- If you are taking any medicines or using any other skin preparations. This includes any which are available to buy without a prescription, such as herbal and complementary medicines.
- If you have ever had an allergic reaction to a medicine or skin product.

How to use azelaic acid

- Before you start the treatment, read the manufacturer’s printed information leaflet from inside the pack. It will give you more information about azelaic acid and will provide you with a full list of the side-effects which you could experience from using it.
- It is usually recommended that you use azelaic acid twice each day, in the morning and the evening. Before you apply the treatment, wash the area with soap and water and gently dry it with a towel. Then apply the cream/gel and rub it in gently. If your skin is particularly sensitive, you can apply the preparation just once a day for a few days before increasing it to twice a day.
- As you apply the cream/gel, try to avoid getting it on the sensitive areas of your skin in or around your nostrils, your eyes and your mouth. Do not apply it to any areas of skin which are irritated or sore.
Getting the most from your treatment

- It is recommended that you use a mild soap and lukewarm water to wash with. Always dry the area gently with a towel before applying the treatment.
- Continue with the treatment for at least a month if you have acne (or two months for rosacea) before deciding if it is working for you or not. The most common reason for treatment failure is giving up too soon. If, however, your skin has not improved after this time then make an appointment to speak with your doctor who will advise you about other suitable preparations to try.

Can azelaic acid cause problems?

Along with their useful effects, most medicines can cause unwanted side-effects although not everyone experiences them. The table below contains some of the most common ones associated with preparations containing azelaic acid. You will find a full list in the manufacturer's information leaflet supplied with your medicine. The unwanted effects often improve as your body adjusts to the new medicine but speak with your doctor or pharmacist if any of the following continue or become troublesome.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very common azelaic acid side-effects (these affect more than 1 in 10 people)</th>
<th>What can I do if I experience this?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Itching, irritation (burning), redness</td>
<td>Reduce the number of times you use the preparation, or stop using it altogether for a few days. When your skin has recovered, start using it again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common azelaic acid side-effects (these affect less than 1 in 10 people)</td>
<td>What can I do if I experience this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry skin, tingling or numbness, rash</td>
<td>If troublesome, reduce the number of times you use the preparation, or stop using it altogether for a few days. When your skin has recovered, start using it again</td>
</tr>
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</table>

If you experience any other symptoms which you think may be due to the preparation, speak with your doctor or pharmacist for further advice.

How to store azelaic acid

- Keep all medicines out of the reach and sight of children.
- Store in a cool, dry place, away from direct heat and light.

Important information about all medicines

- If you buy any medicines, always check with a pharmacist that they are safe to use with your other medicines.
- This preparation is for use on the skin only. If you suspect that someone has swallowed some of it by accident, contact the accident and emergency department of your local hospital for advice.
- If you are having an operation or dental treatment, tell the person carrying out the treatment which medicines you are using.
- This medicine is for you. Never give it to other people even if their condition appears to be the same as yours.
- Do not keep out-of-date or unwanted medicines. Take them to your local pharmacy which will dispose of them for you.
- If you have any questions about this medicine ask your pharmacist.

Further reading & references

- Manufacturer's PIL, Finacea® 15% Gel; Bayer plc, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated June 2015.
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