

Dermatology - Monitoring Clinics for Patients on Systemic Treatment – Isotretinoin

Some treatments used in dermatology require careful monitoring.

We have an acne clinic for monitoring patients on isotretinoin run by one of our Dermatology Clinical Nurse Specialists.

Everyone taking this treatment gets dry lips and dry skin, as the treatment works by reducing grease production by the skin. Dry eyes and nose can be a problem for some. Most people get some aches and pains.

Other side effects are rarer. Depression and Suicide is very uncommon but is listed as a risk. The research evidence for this gives varying answers. It is usually best not to start the tablet just before important exams just in case it does affect the mood.

The medicine is governed by a European directive - because women who get pregnant when taking it, or having recently taken it, can have abnormal babies. Those on treatment must be using an effective form of contraception during treatment and for at least four weeks after treatment has stopped.

Pregnancy tests are carried out every four weeks throughout treatment and we cannot give out a prescription until this has been done. Pharmacies aren't allowed to dispense prescriptions for this medication for more than four weeks for women.

Other side effects are also rare. Blood tests are carried out to check the liver and fat levels before and during treatment.