

How to use your Differin Gel

Acne is due to an excessive oil production in the skin. This usually results in blocked pores (blackheads and whiteheads) which eventually progress into pimples and spots. When treating acne it is important to reduce the oiliness of the skin with various products. Differin gel is excellent for oily skin where there is a lot of blackheads or whiteheads. However, this product may cause discomfort if not used properly.

Differin gel is a vitamin A gel and is known as a peeling agent. It is supposed to dry out the skin. The best way to use it to wash the skin at night before going to bed with a salicytic acid wash (eg "Acnival" or "RoC Purif ac"). If you find the wash too drying or irritating use a bar of "Simple Soap". After washing off the soap and drying the skin, wait for five minutes before applying the Differin gel. Squeeze out a small amount of the gel and apply an even layer all over the acne affected areas and not just onto individual spots. Differin gel will not only clear up existing spots but will also prevent new spots from coming up. It also reduces oiliness of the skin and blackheads and whiteheads.

The gel should be applied very lightly for the first few nights and then the amount increased gradually. You should apply enough gel at night so that when you wake in the morning there is slight dryness or flakiness of the skin. This can be wiped or washed away with soap and water. It is important **not** to apply moisturisers to the skin to reverse the dryness, as this will defeat the whole purpose. If the skin is too dry in the morning or becomes red and sore like sunburn, it means you have applied too much Differin gel. This is not dangerous. Just simply stop the gel for a few days until the redness and soreness settles down. The re-apply the gel but use slightly less.

Like all acne treatments, Differin gel is extremely slow to work. It takes eight to twelve weeks before you start to see a reasonable response and could take up to six months to achieve significant clearance of your acne. Differin gel is usually combined with other topical or tablet acne therapies to achieve best results.

If your skin is very oily Dr Buckley may recommend using Differin gel twice a day after one week of night-time only treatment. Alternatively if there are a lot of pimples and spots Dr Buckley may recommend Acnecide gel which you can use in the morning the same way as Differin gel. However do not start both gels together. Wait for about one week after starting Differin gel at night before you add in the Acnecide gel in the morning.

For acne on the back and/or chest, use Acnecide gel in the same way (i.e. all over the affected areas, enough but not too much) but be aware it can bleach the colour out of shirt collars.

Differin gel may make your skin sensitive to the sunlight. Therefore, if it is very sunny, either stay out of the sun or stop the Differin for a few days to avoid sunburn. Women who are pregnant should not use Differin.

Should you have any difficulties, please contact Dr Buckley.