



DERMWELLESLEY

## Topical ACNE Medications

Information for patients

### **Helpful hints for avoiding common side effects, and getting the most from your medications:**

- ◇ Benzoyl peroxide containing medications may stain/ bleach clothing, sheets, towels, and hair.
- ◇ When applying topical medications to the face, use the “4-dot” method: take a small pea-sized amount (total) of the cream/gel on your finger tip and place dots of the medication in each of these 4 locations of your face: mid-forehead, each cheek, and chin. With fingertips smooth/spread the dots of medication into a thin layer over you whole face. You do not need more than one small pea-sized amount of cream/gel for the whole face.
- ◇ Avoid eye area when applying topical acne medications to the face. The delicate skin around the eyes can be easily irritated by acne medications.
- ◇ Topical medications may lead to dryness where you use them. This almost always improves as your skin gets used to the medication (about 2-3 weeks). To help improve dryness as you skin adjusts to the medication:
  - ◇ Wait 15-20 minutes after washing before applying the topical medication.
  - ◇ Cut back use of medication to every 2-3 days, for 2-3 weeks. Then gradually work up to everyday use.
  - ◇ Moisturize as needed. You can apply an oil free moisturizer over the medication OR if you are very dry, you can mix moisturizer with the medication 50:50 before applying.
  - ◇ If you are too dry, take a few days off and start every fewer times per week using the advice above.
- ◇ Prescription topical acne medications are typically not meant to be used as a “spot treatment”. Unless advised otherwise by your provider, apply topical medications to the whole face. Acne medication do a better job of preventing future acne than clearing existing acne.

---

### **Our Office:**

20 William St, Ste G15, Wellesley, MA 02481  
Office Telephone | (781) 591-4234