



## Dermatology Department

# Adapalene Gels and Cream Differin and Epiduo

### What is Differin?

- Differin cream and gel contain Adapalene 0.1%. Adapalene is a retinoid medicine which is a derivative of vitamin A and belongs to the same group of medicines as Isotretinoin (Roaccutane).
- Adapalene can also be combined with other preparations such as benzoyl peroxide. Epiduo is such a preparation.
- It is used to treat mild to moderate acne.
- It is only available on prescription in the UK.

### How does Adapalene-containing gel/cream work?

The adapalene in the cream/gel works by increasing the turnover of skin cells, aiding the natural exfoliation of the skin surface layer to unblock the pores and sebaceous glands, thus allowing the natural oils to escape and reducing the formation of blackheads and spots.

### Key information about Adapalene-containing gel

- Differin and Epiduo are the “brand names” for adapalene cream and gel/adapalene cream with benzoyl peroxide.
- **Adapalene is NOT generally recommended for pregnant women when other topical treatment alternatives exist, due to evidence of birth defects resulting from oral retinoids. Cease treatment if you believe you may be pregnant and use contraception whilst using Adapalene to ensure you do not get pregnant. Please check with your GP if you are breastfeeding.**
- It is not recommended to apply to large surface areas because of the higher chance of irritation.
- It can be used on your face, back or chest.
- You should apply Adapalene thinly to the whole area that you get acne once a day before going to bed. However, when first using it, it is recommended to apply to a **small test area**. Some individuals are quite sensitive to the treatment, in which case it may be better to apply the treatment less frequently, such as twice per week, and gradually increase the frequency as tolerated. **(Please see also how to apply in the leaflet that comes with the gel).**
- Adapalene can make the skin more sensitive to sunlight and more prone to sunburn. You must protect your skin from sunlight with SPF 50 suncream and clothing/sunhat even on a cloudy day.
- You must not use sunbeds when using Adapalene.
- The most common side effects are a mild burning sensation, redness and dryness of the treated areas.

## How to use Adapalene-containing gel

- Adapalene cream or gel should be applied to the affected skin areas thinly once a day before going to bed.
- Remove any make-up before applying Differin. Clean and dry the skin thoroughly before applying. **Pat rather than rub the skin dry.** Using clean fingertips, apply enough Differin to thinly cover the area affected by acne (for example your whole face, not just individual spots or blackheads). Then wash your hands.
- Do not apply to broken, sunburnt or sensitive areas of skin, or skin affected by eczema. Also take care to avoid getting it on your eyelids or lips, or in your eyes, nose or mouth. If you accidentally get the cream or gel on these areas, wash it off with warm water.
- If you want to apply moisturisers or cosmetics, wait until the Adapalene has been absorbed into your skin.
- Do not apply more than once a day; this will not make it any more effective or work any quicker. It may also make your skin very red or irritated or start peeling.
- You could start using the Adapalene initially 2-3 times per week and then gradually increase to application every night as tolerated.

## How long does Adapalene-containing gel and cream take to work?

Although it starts to work straight away, and some people start to see results after a couple of weeks, most people will need to use it for at least a couple of months before their acne improves.

## Possible side effects of Adapalene-containing gel and cream

Medicines and their possible side effects can affect people in different ways. The following are some of the side effects that may be associated with Adapalene. Just because a side effect is stated here, it does not mean that all people using this acne treatment will experience that or any side effect.

### Common side effects (affect between 1 in 10 and 1 in 100 people)

- Burning sensation.
- Skin irritation.
- Redness of skin.
- Dry skin.

These tend to improve after two to four weeks as your skin gets used to the treatment.

### Uncommon side effects (affect between 1 in 100 and 1 in 1000 people)

- Contact dermatitis.
- Skin discomfort.
- Sunburn.
- Itching.
- Peeling of the skin.

If your skin gets very irritated, try applying it less frequently or stop using it temporarily. If the irritation is more severe or does not get better, you should stop using it completely and consult your doctor.

## Adapalene drug interactions

### Can you use Adapalene gel or cream with other medicines?

- You should check with your pharmacist before taking any new medicines while you are using Adapalene, to make sure that the combination is safe.
- Other retinoid products should not be used while you are using it.
- Please avoid using peeling agents like salicylic acid or glycolic acid, abrasive cleansers, strong drying agents or acne products containing alcohol or astringents while you are using it. They are likely to have an additive drying or irritant effect on the skin.
- You can use acne treatments containing benzoyl peroxide, clindamycin or erythromycin while you are using it. Use these at different times during the day, for example use Adapalene in the morning and the other acne treatment at night (or the other way round).
- Please note you should be able to get repeat prescriptions for these medications from your General Practitioner.

### About this leaflet:

Author:	Lisa Green, Dermatology Nurse
Updated:	November 2023
Approved:	April 2024
Review Date:	April 2027
Edition:	v3

If you have feedback regarding the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet, or if you would like a list of references used to develop this leaflet, please email [pals@dchft.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@dchft.nhs.uk)



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