



Book Supplement

Medications for Acne

Medication	Indication	Adverse Effects/Notes
Retinoids (tretinoin adapalene tazarotene)	Comedones only	Reduce the number of comedones and inflammatory lesions from 40% to 70%. Adapalene is less likely to cause skin irritation and is better tolerated than tretinoin or tazarotene. Topical tretinoin is not teratogenic. May be combined with topical antibiotics.
Tetracycline Doxycycline Minocycline Erythromycin	Moderate to severe inflammatory acne	Adverse effects of oral tetracycline are gastrointestinal tract dyspepsia, vaginal candidiasis in women, photosensitivity. Doxycycline causes gastrointestinal symptoms and photosensitivity. Adverse effects of minocycline include vertigo, dizziness, ataxia, and, rarely, a bluish discoloration. Has also been associated with drug-induced lupus, autoimmune hepatitis, and a hypersensitivity syndrome.
Isotretinoin	Severe nodular acne and acne unresponsive to other therapy	Used as a single therapy except in women who are on oral contraceptives. Most common adverse effects are cheilitis, teratogenicity, hypertriglyceridemia, elevated liver chemistry values, and elevated cholesterol. Use necessitates contraception during and 6 weeks after therapy, baseline and monthly pregnancy tests. Prescription must identify the above and patient must sign consent.
Oral contraceptives (OCs)	Women with acne	Contraindications to OCs include smoking, migraine headaches with aura, and hypertension. Can be used with other standard therapies as listed in this table

©2006 American College of Physicians. MKSAP®14. All rights reserved.