



## Starting Tretinoin (Retin-A)

### Start low and slow

- Begin with the lowest strength (usually 0.025% cream or gel)
- Apply 2–3 nights per week at first (e.g., Monday/Thursday)
- Gradually increase to every other night, then nightly as tolerated — this can take 4–8 weeks
- It can also take a few days for dryness or irritation to appear

### How to Apply

#### 1. Cleanse gently

- Use a mild, non-exfoliating cleanser
- Pat dry and wait **15–20 minutes** before applying tretinoin (to reduce irritation)

#### 2. Use a pea-sized amount for your entire face

- Dab small dots on forehead, cheeks, chin, and nose — then spread thinly

#### 3. Avoid sensitive areas: corners of the nose, mouth, and eyes

#### 4. Moisturize!

- You can apply moisturizer **before and/or after tretinoin** (“moisture sandwich”) to buffer irritation
- Choose a fragrance-free, gentle moisturizer

### Daytime Routine

- **Sunscreen every morning** (SPF 30+)
- Tretinoin makes skin more sensitive to the sun — even minimal exposure can undo progress
- Avoid harsh exfoliants, waxing, or other retinoid products while adjusting

### What to Expect

- Mild dryness, peeling, or redness are **normal** at first (“retinization phase”)
- Usually improves after **4–6 weeks** as your skin adjusts.
- If irritation is too much:
  - Take a break for a few days
  - Reintroduce slowly or apply over moisturizer
  - Avoid other actives (AHAs, BHAs, vitamin C) until your skin adapts

### When You'll See Results

- Texture & glow: **6–8 weeks**
  - Acne & tone: **8–12 weeks**
  - Fine lines & deeper changes: **3–6 months or more**
- Consistency is key!

### Avoid While Using Tretinoin

- Harsh scrubs, exfoliants, chemical peels, or waxing
- Strong acids (glycolic, salicylic) unless directed by your provider