

Retinoid/ Retinol

Your doctor has prescribed a retinoid (i.e. tretinoin, Refissa, Renova) or retinol. This type of medication helps to minimize your pores, reduce acne lesions, improve skin texture, reduce fine lines and wrinkles, and increase collagen. It may help to improve sun spots as it decreases pigment production in the skin. It also promotes cellular differentiation and cell turnover.

A retinol is similar to a retinoid. Retinoids require a prescription where Retinols are available over the counter. Both are available in our office. Retinols are potentially less irritating than retinoids, but some of them can be equally effective as retinoids for skin rejuvenation. Dr. Martin, Dr. Bentley, our Esthetician, or our office staff can help you determine which product may be best for you.

Retinols and retinoids should be used sparingly (only a pea size amount to cover the entire face). Typically, retinols/ retinoids are applied at night time. However, Refissa/ Renova may be applied in the morning or in the evening, whichever is better for your routine.

After cleansing your face, let it dry completely (approximately 5 minutes.). Apply a pea size amount of the retinoid/ retinol to your face, and let it dry completely. If you are using a retinoid/ retinol for wrinkles, you may apply a very small amount to crow's feet area around the eyes, but do not apply it to your eyelids (make sure you stay over the bony part of the eye). After applying the retinoid/ retinol, apply a moisturizer (any non-comedogenic moisturizer is fine). This will help to decrease side effects from the retinoid/ retinol.

Side effects can include peeling, irritation and redness. To limit this, start using your retinoid/ retinol every other night or even every 3rd night if you are particularly sensitive. Increase to every night use as tolerated. If irritation occurs, decrease the frequency of use to every other night or even every third night, until you are eventually able to work up to using it every night. Another trick to minimizing irritation is mixing your retinoid with a moisturizer and then applying the mixture to your face. It can take your skin up to two months to get used to the retinoid. Sometimes irritation will recur with season changes.

Retinoids can make you sensitive to the sun, so it is important to also use sunscreen daily. If you are going to remove any hair from your face by waxing you must stop your retinoid for 7 days prior to waxing to avoid skin damage.