



## DERMWELLESLEY

### TIPS TO NAVIGATE IPLEDGE

Isotretinoin is a medication that was FDA approved in 1982 for the treatment of severe or scarring acne. We also use it for acne that is not improving with alternative medications. Most patients are on isotretinoin for about six months. Following these simple guidelines below will help ensure your course is uninterrupted and runs smoothly.

#### **All Patients:**

- Every person on isotretinoin, male and female, must be enrolled in an FDA-mandated program called IPLEDGE. By enrolling in this system, both your doctor and your pharmacy can ensure that your blood work has been checked/ reviewed each month and that you are aware of the side effects of the medication.
- IPLEDGE has strict rules—**you must have your blood work checked each month and you must be seen in office by your dermatologist each month.** Our office cannot change those rules regardless of your specific case.
- The day you are enrolled in IPLEDGE, you will sign a consent form that is contained in a booklet with pertinent isotretinoin information and side effects. **Do not throw this book away.** It contains your IPLEDGE registration number in addition to your yellow iPledge identification card that must be presented to the pharmacy each month when you fill your prescription.
- You **MUST** have your blood work done prior to starting isotretinoin and then again, every 30 days. Each month (including the first month), you cannot pick up your prescription at the pharmacy until you have heard from our office that your bloodwork is normal.



## DERMWELLESLEY

- Our office is part of the Newton Wellesley Hospital (NWH) system. Bloodwork results are automatically posted in our system when you have your labs done at NWH. We highly recommend you get your lab work done at NWH. Should you choose to have your lab work done elsewhere, it is essential that you have that lab fax us your bloodwork results at 781-369-9737 for review. It is your responsibility to make sure we receive it. Again, **you cannot pick up your prescription until you have heard from our office that your lab tests were normal.**
- There is no way for Dreamlessly to know whether your specific insurance plan will require a prior authorization before allowing you to fill your prescription. Once your prescription arrives at the pharmacy, if your insurance requires a prior authorization, your pharmacy will fax our office additional paperwork. It may take several days for your insurance company to approve the medication. Please be patient with our office—we do our best to have the process move as fast as possible but have no ability to speed up the approval or override your insurance company policy.
- Finally, you and your doctor will review at the time of your visit the most common possible side effects of isotretinoin. Detailed information about all side effects are found in your iPledge booklet and we encourage you to read the booklet thoroughly. If at any time you are experiencing a side effect that you would like to speak with a doctor about, please do not hesitate to contact our office (we also have someone on call for emergencies 24 hours a day, 7 days a week). If you or your child is experiencing mood related changes, please stop the medication and alert our office immediately or dial 911 if safety is at risk.
- Unfortunately, because of the requirements of IPLEDGE program, our office CANNOT help you fill your prescription after normal business hours or on the weekend. If you are having trouble filling your prescription after hours or on the weekend, please call our office

**20 William Street, Suite G15, Wellesley, MA 02481**  
**781-591-4234 (p) 781-369-9737 (f)**



## DERMWELLESLEY

during regular business hours and we will work with you to help resolve any issues you may have. Do not fret—if you skip a few days of isotretinoin, it is still in your system and will not result in any setbacks for your overall course.

### **Other Things to Know:**

- You should discontinue ALL other acne medications while you are on isotretinoin unless your doctor tells you otherwise. This includes all acid and benzoyl peroxide washes, all topical acne therapies, and all oral therapies. **Specifically, tetracycline antibiotics (minocycline and doxycycline) and isotretinoin can have a very dangerous interaction if taken together. Doxycycline and Minocycline antibiotics must never be taken with isotretinoin.**
- Avoid alcohol while on isotretinoin
- Do not get any body hair waxed while you are on isotretinoin.
- Do not take any supplements with additional vitamin A, while on isotretinoin.
- Avoid Tylenol while on isotretinoin (Advil and Motrin are fine)
- Avoid muscle/ bodybuilding supplements while on isotretinoin
- Do not donate blood while you are on isotretinoin and for an additional 1 month after your last pill
- Take extra care in the sun, as you are at higher risk for sunburn when you are on isotretinoin.
- Do not have any laser procedures, microdermabrasion, resurfacing procedures performed on your skin while you are on isotretinoin (and in some cases up to 1 year after—ask your doctor when it is acceptable for you to have a procedure should you need one). You may be at higher risk of scarring during these procedures should you have them performed while on isotretinoin or too soon after your course if completed.



## DERMWELLESLEY

### Female Patients on Isotretinoin

- **You must not become pregnant while you are on isotretinoin and for at least 30 days after you finish your course.** While on isotretinoin, the effects on a developing fetus could result in numerous severe long-term birth defects or could be catastrophic. Consult your ipledge books for detailed information about this.
- **Given these risks, IPLEDGE requires a negative pregnancy test when you enroll in the system and again in 30 days right BEFORE you can receive your prescription. You must then have a negative pregnancy test every 30 days for the entirety of your isotretinoin course and 30 days after your last dose. There are no exceptions to this rule regardless of your age, sexual orientation, or sexual activity status.**
- Once you have received your prescription you have a maximum of **7 DAYS** to have the medication filled at the pharmacy. Remember, you must have your bloodwork done and reviewed by your doctor BEFORE you can fill your prescription. This means if you have your bloodwork done after your appointment, it still **MUST** be within 7 days of being seen in our office. If you exceed this 7-day window, you will need to return to our office for an additional urine pregnancy test. In some cases, IPLEDGE will lock you out of the system for a full 30 days (and you will not be able to get your medication) and there is nothing that your doctor can do to override that.
- **As a female, there is one additional step required AFTER your blood work has been reviewed BEFORE you can pick up your medication. You must take a quiz online at [www.ipledgeprogram.com](http://www.ipledgeprogram.com).** During your 30 day wait period after your first negative pregnancy test in our office, IPLEDGE should contact you by mail with a username and password. DO



## DERMWELLESLEY

NOT THROW THIS AWAY. You will need to log into the system each month to answer questions about your methods of contraception. You and your doctor both will take

this quiz (you take your quiz at home and we take your quiz in our office). You and your doctor must BOTH have the same answers for your methods of contraception (this should be discussed at the time of your registration). Once you have chosen a method of birth control, you must notify your doctor if you need to change your method at any point during your course.

• **Please note:** abstinence is an acceptable method of birth control for ipledge. If you pledge abstinence, this means you are pledging to NOT have sexual intercourse with a male for the entire duration of your treatment and for an additional 1 month after your last pill. If at any time, you are contemplating sexual activity, please notify your doctor at once. Your doctor will recommend additional birth control methods such as putting you on an oral contraceptive or may recommend evaluation with a gynecologist to discuss an intrauterine device to ensure that you do not become pregnant. Regardless of your contraceptive method, you need to use 2 METHODS OF BIRTH CONTROL at all times (for example, take your birth control pills and use male condoms). Remember, for birth control pills to be maximally effective, they need to be taken at roughly the same time each day, and pills cannot be skipped.

If you miss an appointment, you MUST reschedule. As a female, if you are not seen in the office every 30 to 37 days, you will be locked out of the IPLEDGE system for 1 month. Our office tries to be flexible and if you must cancel an appointment, you need to be rescheduled within a week's time to avoid being locked out. Again, there is nothing we can do to override a lockout, so we do our best to prevent this from happening to ensure your isotretinoin course runs smoothly.

***HAVE MORE QUESTIONS? PLEASE, ASK YOUR DOCTOR!***

**20 William Street, Suite G15, Wellesley, MA 02481  
781-591-4234 (p) 781-369-9737 (f)**