

FAQ about Differin Gel

What is Differin Gel?

Differin contains the only full prescription fighting retinoid available over the counter: adapalene. It's the first new OTC active ingredient to treat acne approved by the FDA in more than 30 years.

How long has Differin Gel been on the market?

Differin Gel is dermatologist-developed, and its active ingredient — adapalene — has been prescribed to over 40 million people globally for more than 20 years. It was approved by the FDA for over-the-counter use without a prescription in 2016.

What makes Differin Gel unique from other options currently available?

Differin Gel contains adapalene, a multi-benefit, dermatologist-recommended retinoid, available without a prescription, to clear breakouts where they start (deep in the pores); prevent acne before it begins; and, as a result, restore the skin's texture and tone.

Is Differin Gel dermatologist developed and tested?

Yes, Differin Gel is dermatologist developed and includes a dermatologist-recommended retinoid. According to the American Academy of Dermatology's (AAD) therapeutic treatment guidelines, topical retinoids like adapalene are recommended as a primary therapy for initial treatment of mild and moderate acne, even ahead of popular over-the-counter products that contain salicylic acid. The AAD is the largest organization of dermatologists (over 19,000 worldwide) who provide public education about dermatology and dermatologic health.

Is Differin Gel FDA approved?

Yes, Differin Gel (adapalene 0.1%) is FDA-approved for over-the-counter treatment of acne (*acne vulgaris*). For more than 20 years, doctors have prescribed the retinoid found in Differin Gel to over 40 million people globally.

Is there still a prescription version of Differin Gel?

Differin Gel (adapalene 0.1%) was launched in stores and online, available without a prescription, in January 2017. Other products containing adapalene are still available with a prescription.

FAQ about retinoids and adapalene

What are retinoids, and why are they important in clearing acne?

Topical retinoids, like Differin Gel, play a crucial role in the treatment of acne. In 1925, studies linked abnormal cell turnover to vitamin A deficiencies. Retinoids have vitamin A activity and help regulate that turnover to make sure your skin goes through the right process, creating a healthier environment for skin. Regulating skin cell turnover to a normal rate helps to keep the pores from clogging and target acne before it even starts. Through the years, researchers developed different forms of retinoids, which have become the basis for many prescription acne medications.

Are all retinoids the same?

No, not all retinoids are created equal. There are currently three retinoids in use for topical acne medications — adapalene (over the counter and prescription), tretinoin and tazarotene. Differin Gel uses adapalene, an ingredient designed with improved tolerability in mind, resulting in less redness and skin irritation. Adapalene has shown in studies to have superior tolerability compared to other prescription retinoid products not containing adapalene. Adapalene is also the first multi-benefit retinoid acne ingredient available over the counter, without a prescription. Benefits include:

1. Continually renews skin cells to help prevent pores from clogging
2. Acting as an anti-inflammatory agent to reduce redness and swelling at the source
3. Restoring skin tone and texture by clearing acne

What is the difference between retinoid and retinol?

Retinol is a type of retinoid found in many cosmetic products. However, adapalene is much more powerful than retinol, and it's the only FDA-approved retinoid available for OTC use to clear acne.

What is the percentage of retinoid ingredient found in Differin Gel?

Differin Gel is the only OTC acne treatment to contain a prescription-strength retinoid. This powerful medication contains 0.1% adapalene to clear acne.

FAQ about the Differin difference

I've heard salicylic acid and benzoyl peroxide are also effective treatments for acne. How are retinoids different?

Adapalene is the newest advancement in acne treatment available without a prescription in over 30 years; it's able to effectively target two causes of acne. Differin Gel clears redness and inflammation associated with acne and helps prevent pimples, blackheads and clogged pores before they occur.

Adapalene vs. other over-the-counter acne treatments

Active Ingredients:	Adapalene	Benzoyl Peroxide	Salicylic Acid
Clears acne, prevents acne to restore skin texture and tone	YES	YES	YES
Balances skin cell production to treat acne	YES	NO	NO
Significant anti-inflammatory benefit	YES	NO	NO
Once-a-day application provides 24-hour action	YES	NO	NO
Safe for clothing and sheets	YES	NO	YES

FAQ about Differin Gel expectations

How long does Differin Gel take to work?

Differin Gel starts working immediately, and results may be seen in as little as two weeks. It may take some time to see significant results, but with continued use, it's been proven to work, so hang in there. In a clinical study, patients reported up to an 87% decrease in acne after 12 weeks of use.

Are there any side effects?

Differin Gel has superior tolerability compared to other retinoid acne formulations not containing adapalene. Common side effects include dryness, redness, irritation and burning/stinging. These symptoms usually peak at the 2- to 4-week mark before subsiding. Not everyone will experience these side effects, and in clinical studies, average scores were less than mild.

What is retinization?

Retinization is the adjustment period in which the skin becomes acclimated with the retinoid. During this time skin may become irritated, resulting in dryness, scaling, redness and burning/stinging. Irritation usually lessens after four weeks of continued, once-daily use. It's also important to note that some never experience retinization. This simply means Differin Gel is still working under the surface of the skin without causing any irritation. [Differin Soothing Moisturizer](#) works to help relieve the dryness associated with retinization.

When is irritation most likely to occur?

Skin irritation (redness, itching, dryness, burning) is more likely to occur in the first few weeks of use and/or if you use more than one topical acne product at a time. Avoid products containing salicylic acid, alpha hydroxy acid or glycolic acid, which may dry out your skin and worsen irritation.

If I experience irritation (or signs of retinization), should I discontinue use? What can I do to minimize skin irritation?

Absolutely not. It's a common, temporary reaction that will usually subside after about 4 weeks of use. Use of Differin Gel should not be discontinued, but be sure to always use it just once daily. Try a gentle, non-comedogenic moisturizer, like [Differin Soothing Moisturizer](#), to help manage irritation.

The early skin irritation that sometimes occurs when using Differin Gel is known as retinization, which is the adjustment period when your skin adapts to the retinoid. Using a gentle cleanser and moisturizer may help decrease dryness and other signs of irritation. If you experience prolonged symptoms, or if irritation becomes severe (overly bothersome), stop use and consult your physician before using the product again.

Irritation may occur if using more than one topical acne product at a time. Avoid products containing harsh chemicals, salicylic acid, alpha hydroxy acid or glycolic acid, which may dry out skin and worsen irritation.

How does Differin Gel look and feel?

Differin Gel is an oil-free and fragrance-free water-based gel that doesn't contain alcohol. It's light in texture and won't leave skin feeling sticky.

FAQ about using Differin

How often should I use Differin Gel?

Differin Gel should be used only once daily and integrated as an important step into your morning or evening skincare routine. Try to apply the product at the same time each day. For best results, first wash skin with a mild (non-irritating), non-drying cleanser; apply a thin layer of Differin Gel to clean, dry skin (full face); and follow treatment with a moisturizer. If Differin Gel is used during the day, allow it to dry before applying sunscreen. Differin Gel should not be used more than once a day. Applying more than directed will not provide faster or better results.

Can I use Differin Gel as a spot treatment? Why should Differin Gel be applied to the entire face?

Differin Gel is different. It's highly effective, but you can't use it like a typical over-the-counter acne product. It's not a spot treatment and should not be used to treat a single pimple. For example, if you get acne on the face, Differin Gel should be applied to the entire face. It's meant for once-daily use, even when you see no signs of acne.

Can I stop using Differin Gel once my acne clears up?

For best results, it's important to continue using Differin Gel even after skin looks clearer to help prevent future breakouts. With continued use, Differin Gel will continue to clear redness and inflammations caused by acne; prevent blackheads and clogged pores, and, as a result, restore the skin's texture and tone.

Is there anything I can't do after using Differin Gel?

Differin Gel should not be used in conjunction with products containing alpha hydroxy, salicylic or glycolic acids, which may worsen irritation. Irritation may occur if using more than one topical acne product at a time. Do not use wax to remove unwanted hair in areas where the product has been applied. When possible, limit sun exposure, including light from tanning beds. When going outdoors, use sunscreen as labeled.

Is it safe to shave while using Differin Gel with adapalene?

Yes, you can shave. However, because irritation may occur when using adapalene, especially during the earlier stages of treatment, it's a good idea to use shaving products that are mild and gentle. A moisturizer may be used to help alleviate dryness. Do not use wax to remove unwanted hair in areas where the product has been applied.

Who should use Differin Gel?

Differin Gel is approved for use in people 12 years and older with mild-to-moderate acne. If you have severe acne, talk to your doctor or visit acne.com for more information.

Is it okay for pregnant women to use Differin Gel?

Differin Gel is a safe and effective treatment. However, as with any medication, it's a good idea to check with your doctor if you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant or breastfeeding.