

Minocycline

Minocycline is an antibiotic used for both its antibacterial as well as its anti-inflammatory properties. When treating acne and rosacea it is commonly used continuously for many months, even years.

- **May be taken with food or on an empty stomach, if tolerated.** If you take this medicine with milk, there may be some decreased absorption, but this is unlikely to matter.
- **Do not take minocycline at the same time as iron supplements.** Iron tablets can significantly decrease minocycline absorption. Avoid taking one within 2 hours of the other.
- **Do not take this medicine if you are pregnant or breast feeding.** If you think you might be pregnant, stop taking Minocycline immediately and contact the office.
- **Take the medicine regularly.** Do NOT stop it as soon as your pimples go away. Minocycline PREVENTS pimples; it does not really make existing ones go away very well. If you take the medication only on days when you have pimples, it will not work, and the acne bacterium is more likely to become resistant to minocycline.
- **Birth control pills.** If you are taking birth control pills, there is a small chance that it could keep them from working as a contraceptive.

Common side effects:

Vaginal yeast infections—eating yoghurt or taking acidophilus reduces the chance of this.
Diarrhea. Headache. Dizziness.

Uncommon side effects :

Hyperpigmentation. This can appear as gradually darkening smudgy brown or blue areas, especially on the legs, but sometimes on the face or in the mouth or in scars. This is reversible on discontinuing minocycline, but the darker the pigment, the longer it takes---sometimes years! Most patients with this side effect have been on minocycline for over a year, usually at relatively high doses. It has also rarely been reported to cause tooth discoloration, even in adults—while rare, tooth discoloration is not easily reversible.

Rare side effects:

Sun sensitivity. You should take normal sun precautions: sunscreen, sun-protective clothing, and avoid intense sun exposure.

Extremely rare complications:

- As with any medicine, there can be very rare, serious, unpredictable reactions, like allergic reactions, liver inflammation, blood cell abnormalities, or severe rash.
- Lupus-like syndrome: fever, fatigue, and joint pains. Seen mainly in people on minocycline for more than two years; 80% are female, 80% resolve promptly on discontinuing the medicine.
- Pseudotumor cerebri: in this condition pressure gradually builds up in the cerebrospinal fluid. This causes headaches, but if it continues for a long time it can damage vision. Unusual headaches are cause for concern and should be discussed with our office.
- There has been a published concern that chronic use of minocycline (and other antibiotics) might increase the risk of inflammatory bowel disease; this is a contested notion, and it may be years before we see conclusive evidence one way or the other.

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