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Avage – (Tazarotene) Cream, 0.1%

Avage is a form of vitamin A. It has been used for a number of years in the treatment of acne because of its beneficial exfoliative (skin peeling) action, especially on plugged oil glands (comedones). It also has been noted to be useful in the treatment of thickened skin disorders (hyperkeratosis). However, its ONLY FDA approval is for the treatment of acne.

In recent months, considerable attention has been given Avage as an anti-aging agent. Excessive exposure to sunlight prematurely ages skin. Sun-damaged skin may appear wrinkled, yellowed, blotchy, coarse, rough, leathery, and dry. Oftentimes, these changes do not appear until ten to twenty years following excessive sun exposure. Avage was found to be helpful in treating sun-aging damage to the skin. Primarily, the improvements were noted to be:

1. Exfoliation and increased epidermal turnover. These actions increased the turgor (fullness) of the skin and reduced the appearance of fine wrinkling.
2. New blood vessel formation and increased blood flow (a more helpful color).
3. More uniformed pigmentation.
4. Increased collagen formation in the deeper skin layers.

While Avage may be helpful in eliminating fine wrinkling (rhytids), it will not remove deep wrinkling or expression lines. As we age, a number of things happen to our face. Our skin loses moisture, it loses elasticity, the fat will re-distribute, and the muscles deteriorate or atrophy. Face-lift surgery tightens muscles, removes extra fatty tissue, and re-positions and removes excess skin. A phenol chemical peel or laser resurfacing removes the superficial layer of the skin. They penetrate into the deeper layers of the skin to provide a rejuvenation of the skin and a “tightening” effect. They are very effective in removing deep wrinkles and are more permanent in their effect than Avage. However, there is a one-week “convalescent” period before one can usually resume normal social activities following a phenol chemical peel or laser resurfacing.

Avage is not a replacement for face-lift surgery, laser resurfacing, or phenol chemical face peeling. However, it can be an effective, adjunctive agent in maintaining a youthful, freshened appearance to the skin, if used correctly.

Recommended Use

1. Wash face gently and allow to dry.
2. Apply a pea-sized amount of Avage to forehead, cheeks, and chin (can also be used on the neck and the backs of the hands, if desired).
3. Moisturize as needed – after your skin has absorbed the medication.
4. Apply Avage initially two times per week at bedtime. (Over a period of time, you may be able to apply Avage more frequently.)

Precautions

1. Avage may be drying to your skin. For that reason you may need to use a moisturizer more frequently. The moisturizer, which you normally use, will probably be satisfactory. However, some individuals with sensitive skin find that Eucerin lotion or Complex-15 lotion is more satisfactory for sensitive skin.
2. Because Avage is removing the “filtering layers” of the skin, you may burn more easily when exposed to the sun. For this reason it is recommended that a sunscreen rated 15 or higher be used. Such a sunscreen should be applied to the skin the night before planned sun exposure and then again approximately one hour before going out into the sun. This will help you to obtain a tan but avoid a sunburn. There are many excellent over-the-counter sunscreens. A sun-screen should be rated “15”. This will provide you with the maximum amount of sun block. Many individuals find that they are sensitive to PABA, which is contained in many sun-screens. Sun-screens can be obtained which do not contain PABA and are recommended for more sensitive skin.

* No studies have been performed regarding the safety of Avage use during pregnancy or during breast-feeding. For that reason, it is recommended that Avage not be used if one thinks that they might be pregnant, are trying to conceive, or is breast-feeding. It is always recommended that an individual talk to their obstetrician or pediatrician before taking or applying any medications while pregnant or while breast-feeding.

** Some individuals with more sensitive skin find that Avage is too irritating to their skin. It is not uncommon for a rash to develop temporarily. However, if pain or irritation persists or if you have any questions or concerns, it is recommended to stop Avage applications immediately and contact our office. We are always more than happy to see you.

***It is recommended that individuals using Avage be evaluated periodically. For this reason we ask that you contact the office every three to four months in order that we may evaluate how your “treatments” are progressing. Often times the concentration and/or frequency of Avage applications can be adjusted at these times to maximize beneficial effects.