



inside isotretinoin



iPLEDGE Is A Go

The isotretinoin manufacturers are pleased to announce that the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved iPLEDGE, an enhanced pregnancy risk management program designed to minimize fetal exposure to isotretinoin. After receiving input from an FDA Advisory Committee meeting in February 2004, the isotretinoin manufacturers, working in cooperation with the FDA, have enhanced and combined the current risk management programs (S.M.A.R.T., A.L.E.R.T., S.P.I.R.I.T., and I.M.P.A.R.T.) into one collaborative program called iPLEDGE.

The iPLEDGE program is a computer-based risk management program designed to further the public health goal to eliminate fetal exposure to isotretinoin through a special restricted distribution program approved by the FDA. The program strives to ensure that:

- No female patient starts isotretinoin therapy if pregnant
- No female patient on isotretinoin therapy becomes pregnant

This enhanced program is a **SINGLE** pregnancy risk management program for prescribing and dispensing all isotretinoin products (brand and generic products) and includes a pregnancy registry. Beginning **November 1, 2005**, the iPLEDGE Pregnancy Registry will collect data on pregnancies that occur in female patients who become pregnant while taking isotretinoin or within 30 days of their last dose. Data from the pregnancy registry will be assessed and reported to the isotretinoin manufacturers and to the FDA and will be held in the strictest confidence.

The iPLEDGE program is the only way to prescribe, dispense, and distribute isotretinoin. Prescribers, patients, pharmacies, and wholesaler/distributors **are required** to register and meet specific requirements for the program.

Getting Started With iPLEDGE

The iPLEDGE program replaces all pre-existing isotretinoin pregnancy prevention programs. The enhanced iPLEDGE program will include the following:

- Prescribers, patients, pharmacies, and wholesalers must register in the iPLEDGE program.
- Prescribers must register all patients in the system and must interact with the system every month to enter:
 - Confirmation of counseling of program requirements
 - Date of office visit
 - 2 forms of contraception (for females of childbearing potential)
 - Negative pregnancy test results (for females of childbearing potential)
- Patients who are females of childbearing potential must interact with the system every month to confirm use of contraception and answer questions about program requirements.
- Pregnancy tests must be performed monthly by a CLIA-certified lab.
- Pharmacies must obtain authorization through the program web site or automated phone system to fill and dispense every isotretinoin prescription.
- Prescribers and pharmacies must renew their activation annually.

iPLEDGE Steps

- Prescribers and pharmacies should review the educational materials and activate with the iPLEDGE program.
- Prescribers and pharmacies must attest to understanding of and agreement to follow the iPLEDGE program requirements.
- Prescribers *must* counsel patients on the risks of fetal exposure to isotretinoin.
- Prescribers *must* counsel patients on the program requirements.
- Pharmacies *must* obtain authorization to dispense every prescription.

Key iPLEDGE Dates

- Preregistration of wholesalers began in September 2005.
- Preregistration of prescribers and pharmacies began in August 2005.
- Activation of prescribers and pharmacies began in September 2005.
- Patient registration begins December 30, 2005.
 - Patients currently being treated with isotretinoin may be registered in the iPLEDGE program or continue in their current program until February 28, 2006.
 - Starting March 1, 2006, **all** patients taking isotretinoin **must** be registered in the iPLEDGE program.
- New labeled product will be available on November 1, 2005.
- Wholesalers that have not registered by December 30, 2005 will not be eligible to order isotretinoin from the manufacturers, and must return all unused product to the manufacturer.
- Pharmacies that have not registered and activated by December 30, 2005 will not be eligible to order isotretinoin from their wholesaler and must return all unused product to the manufacturer.
- Prescribers who have not registered and activated by March 1, 2006 will not be eligible to prescribe isotretinoin for patients.
- Patients who have not been registered by March 1, 2006 will not be eligible to receive any isotretinoin product.

SAFETY NOTICE

Isotretinoin must not be used by female patients who are or may become pregnant. There is an extremely high risk that severe birth defects will result if pregnancy occurs while taking isotretinoin in any amount, even for a short period of time. Potentially any fetus exposed during pregnancy can be affected. There are no accurate means of determining whether an exposed fetus has been affected. Because of this toxicity, isotretinoin can only be marketed under a special restricted distribution program. This program is called iPLEDGE. Under this program, prescribers must be registered and activated with the iPLEDGE program and can prescribe isotretinoin only to registered patients who meet all the requirements of iPLEDGE. Isotretinoin can be dispensed only by a pharmacy registered and activated with iPLEDGE. Registered and activated pharmacies can only receive isotretinoin from wholesalers registered with iPLEDGE.

Patients on isotretinoin have been known to become depressed or to develop other serious mental health problems. Some people have had thoughts of hurting themselves or putting an end to their own lives. Some people tried to end their own lives and some have ended their own lives. There have been reports that people on isotretinoin were aggressive or violent. No one knows if isotretinoin caused these problems or behaviors or if they would have happened even if the person did not take isotretinoin.

Isotretinoin use has been associated with a condition caused by increased pressure on the brain. This condition may occur more often in patients also taking tetracycline. Patients should be aware of other serious side effects, including problems with the pancreas, liver, stomach, bones, muscles, hearing, vision, lipids, allergic reactions, blood sugar, or red and white blood cells. The most common, less serious adverse events include dry skin, chapped lips, dry eyes, and dry nose that may lead to nosebleeds. Patients should be advised about these adverse events and routinely monitored by a doctor during treatment with isotretinoin.

Please refer to the isotretinoin package inserts for full prescribing and dispensing instructions.

For more information or for electronic registration, visit the program web site at www.ipledgeprogram.com or call the automated phone system at 1-866-495-0654.