

Zorac (tazarotene)

How does it work?

Zorac gel contains the active ingredient tazarotene, which is a type of medicine known as a retinoid. Retinoids have a structure similar to vitamin A and are involved in the normal growth of skin.

It is not known exactly how tazarotene works, but it is thought to inhibit the excessive cell growth and keratinisation (process by which skin cells become thickened due to the deposition of a protein within them) seen in psoriasis. It therefore reduces the thickening of the skin, plaque formation and scaling.

Zorac gel should be applied once daily in the evening. The benefits of this treatment may be seen after week of application, although the treatment may be used for up to 12 weeks.

What is it used for?

- Mild to moderate **psoriasis**, affecting up to 10 per cent of the total skin surface.

Warning!

- This gel is for external use only.
- Avoid contact with the eyes, face and hair-covered scalp.
- Wash your hands after applying this medicine to avoid inadvertently transferring it to other areas.
- You should not cover the area being treated with airtight dressings such as bandages or other dressings, as these will enhance the absorption of the medicine into the body and may increase the risk of adverse effects.
- You can use cosmetics or moisturisers while using this gel, but you should not apply them at the same time. You can use cosmetics and moisturisers one hour before or after applying this gel.
- Avoid exposure to sunlight, sunlamps or sunbeds while using this medicine, as it increases the sensitivity of your skin to UV light. If exposure to sunlight cannot be avoided, use protective measures such as sunscreens or protective clothing over the areas of skin you have treated with this medicine.
- This medicine may be harmful to an unborn baby. For this reason, women will need to have a pregnancy test before treatment is started with this medicine. Women taking this medicine who could get pregnant must use a reliable method of contraception (such as an injected or implanted form) to prevent pregnancy.

Not to be used in

- **Pregnancy.**
- Women of child-bearing age not using a reliable method of contraception.
- **Breastfeeding.**
- People with psoriasis that has pus discharge (psoriasis pustulosa).

- People with psoriasis that has excessive scale formation (exfoliate psoriasis).
- Zorac gel contains butylhydroxyanisole and butylhydroxytoluene, which can both cause skin reactions and irritation to the eyes and mucous membranes.

This medicine should not be used if you are allergic to one of its ingredients. Please inform your doctor or pharmacist if you have previously experienced such an allergy.

If you feel you have experienced an allergic reaction, stop using this medicine and inform your doctor or pharmacist immediately.

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

Certain medicines should not be used during pregnancy or breastfeeding. However, other medicines may be safely used in pregnancy or breastfeeding providing the benefits to the mother outweigh the risks to the unborn baby. Always inform your doctor if you are pregnant or planning a pregnancy, before using any medicine.

- This medicine should not be used during pregnancy as it can be absorbed through the skin and may be harmful to the developing baby. Seek medical advice from your doctor.
- Women who could get pregnant should use a reliable method of contraception to avoid getting pregnant while being treated with this medicine.
- It is not known if this medicine passes into breast milk. It should not be used by breastfeeding mothers. Seek medical advice from your doctor.

Side effects

Medicines and their possible side effects can affect individual people in different ways. The following are some of the side effects that are known to be associated with this medicine. Just because a side effect is stated here, it does not mean that all people using this medicine will experience that or any side effect.

Very common (affecting more than 1 in 10 people)

- Itching (pruritis).
- Burning sensation of skin.
- Redness.
- Irritation in and around area of use.

Common (affecting between 1 in 10 and 1 in 100 people)

- Contact dermatitis.
- Skin rash.
- Worsening of psoriasis.
- Pain and stinging of skin.
- Dry or peeling skin.

The side effects listed above may not include all of the side effects reported by the medicine's manufacturer.

For more information about any other possible risks associated with this medicine, please read the information provided with the medicine or consult your doctor or pharmacist.

How can this medicine affect other medicines?

It is important to tell your doctor or pharmacist what medicines you are already taking, including those bought without a prescription and herbal medicines, before you start treatment with this medicine. Similarly, check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking any new medicines while using this one, to ensure that the **combination is safe**.

You should not receive light treatment such as PUVA or other UV light treatment while using this medicine.

You should avoid using skin exfoliating products and coal tar based products whilst using this medicine, as they may increase any skin irritation.

Other medicines containing the same active ingredient

There are currently no other medicines available in the UK that contain tazarotene as the active ingredient.