

AcnePSP Question and Answer

QUESTION: What is the effect of missing a dose of oral or topical medication?

We are always told to use our medicines as prescribed and to finish the course so just how serious is it to miss the odd dose or application of acne treatment? Almost certainly it isn't serious at all as long as the rest of the time you use your treatment properly. There is no need to use twice as much or double the dose next time. In fact, it's better not to do either of those as you may increase the risk of side effects.

No one knows how many doses or applications have to be missed before the treatment starts to become less effective but frequently forgetting your acne treatment isn't good as this will begin to affect how well it works. Regular use of medication is important to maintain an effective amount of the active ingredient at the site of action in the skin. Below a certain concentration, the active ingredient will stop working altogether.

Studies have shown that a number of different factors affect whether people with acne use their treatment regularly and as prescribed. These factors include:

- *How many times a day a medication has to be taken/used*
- *How easy topical products are to apply*
- *How gentle topical products are to the skin – products that don't dry and irritate the skin are more likely to be used properly*
- *How complicated the treatment regimen is – simple is better*
- *Being given adequate verbal and written instructions how to use the product properly*
- *Knowing what (if any) side effects to expect and how long they will take to settle*
- *Understanding how the treatment works and when to improvement is likely to begin*
- *If given more than one product, appreciating why one isn't enough on its own*
- *Linking medication use to a daily ritual like cleaning your teeth*

If you're starting on a new medication, make sure you know how to use it properly, how it works and how long it will take to work. If you've been given two different products to use/take, this is because your doctor thinks the combination will either work more quickly or bring about a greater degree of improvement than a single treatment. Don't bin your acne treatment if it hasn't cleared your skin in two weeks. For reasons we don't fully understand, all acne treatments take time to work so patience, perseverance and regular use of your medication is very important. If a treatment hasn't had any effect after 4-6 weeks and you've used or taken it properly, then it probably isn't the right one for you.