

This Is What Differin Gel Can And Can't Do For You

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By [Maria Faller](#)/Oct. 6, 2021 11:54 am EDT

Bathroom counters across the globe hold targeted skincare items like cleansers, serums, and creams. Many of these products, specifically the anti-aging genre, contain [retinol](#), which is a type of retinoid from vitamin A that can help smooth fine lines, even skin tone, and support healthy skin (via [Healthline](#)).

There is a difference, however, between retinol and retinoid. "Retinoid is essentially a basic umbrella term for both over-the-counter retinol and prescription retinoids," dermatologist Melissa Levin explained to [Byrdie](#). She goes on to say that the biggest difference between the two is strength. The most powerful retinoids are available by prescription only. However, one retinoid that you can find over the counter is Differin, which contains the active ingredient adapalene. Because it's a retinoid, this gel helps fight fine lines and wrinkles, boosts collagen, smooths skin texture, and increases cell turnover (via [Byrdie](#)).

However, Differin can do more for your skin than a regular retinol can. Dr. Rachel Maiman, a cosmetic and board-certified dermatologist, explained to [Bustle](#) that it can be a lifesaver for those with acne-prone skin.

Differin gel can be effective for acne



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According to its website, [Differin Gel](#) is marketed and sold as an acne treatment, stating it can prevent "breakouts, blackheads, whiteheads, blemishes, and clogged pores."

Dermatologist Dr. Rachel Maiman explained to [Bustle](#) that adapalene, the main ingredient in the gel, helps prevent [acne](#) by speeding up cell turnover, reducing inflammation, and removing build-up in the pores. This retinoid works so well that [Verywell Health](#) calls it a "super exfoliator."

Differin is not a spot treatment, as stated in the manufacturer's FAQ section, so it should not be used if you get the occasional zit. It is an acne prevention treatment and should be used as a thin layer applied to the entire face daily. Dermatologist Dr. Ava Shamban explains to [Health](#) that there won't be immediate results, as there is an adjustment period for your skin to glow up. "Almost everyone gets dry [skin] and may have temporary redness," Dr. Shamban told Health.

Whether you are struggling with adult-onset acne or pubescent hormonal acne, it's worth asking your dermatologist if Differin is right for you.

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