### Assessment

Prior to administration:
- Obtain a complete health history including allergies, drug history, and possible drug interactions.
- Obtain pregnancy and lactation status.
- Assess for history of psychiatric disorders.
- Assess vital signs to obtain baseline information.

### Potential Nursing Diagnoses

- Body Image, Disturbed, related to presence of acne and possible worsening of symptoms after initiation of treatment
- Decisional Conflict, related to desire for pregnancy, and necessity of preventing pregnancy during therapy with isotretinoin
- Noncompliance, related to length of treatment time or failure to use effective contraception
- Skin Integrity, Impaired, related to inflammation, redness, and scaling secondary to treatment

### Planning: Client Goals and Expected Outcomes

The client will:
- Experience decreased acne, without side effects or adverse reactions.
- Demonstrate acceptance of body image.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the drug’s action by accurately describing drug side effects and precautions.
- Use contraceptive measures to prevent pregnancy while taking medication.
- Comply with treatment regimen by keeping all scheduled appointments and laboratory visits for testing.

### Implementation

#### Interventions and (Rationales)

- **Monitor lab studies during treatment, including blood glucose.** (Monitoring of lab values is important in determining complications or serious side effects.)
- **Discuss potential adverse reactions to drug therapy.** (Understanding of drug effects is important for compliance.)
- **Monitor for cardiovascular problems.** (Use isotretinoin with caution in clients with heart block, especially if client is also taking a beta-blocker.)
- **Monitor emotional health.** (Client may become depressed secondary to acne itself, length of treatment, possibility of worsening symptoms at beginning of treatment, changed body image, or drug itself.)
- **Monitor CBC, blood lipid levels, glucose levels, liver function tests, eye exam, GI status, and urinalysis.** (Monitoring of lab values is important in assessing for complications or serious side effects.)
- **Monitor for vision changes.** (Corneal opacities and/or cataracts may develop as result of isotretinoin use. Dryness of eyes during treatment is common. Night vision may be diminished during treatment.)
- **Monitor alcohol use.** (Alcohol use with isotretinoin leads to increased triglyceride levels.)

#### Client Education/Discharge Planning

- **Instruct client to keep laboratory appointments prior to therapy and periodically during therapy, and if diabetic, to perform home blood glucose monitoring.**
- **Instruct client:**
  - To use two forms of reliable birth control for 1 month before beginning treatment, during treatment, and for 1 month following completion of treatment.
  - Not to donate blood during treatment and for a minimum of 4 weeks after completion of treatment; isotretinoin in donated blood could cause fetal damage if given to a pregnant woman.
  - To talk with pediatrician about alternative methods of feeding, if breast-feeding.
  - To avoid use of vitamin A products.
- **Discuss with client importance of complete disclosure regarding medical history and medications.**
- **Instruct client:**
  - To report signs of depression immediately and discontinue isotretinoin.
  - To report any feelings of suicide.
- **Teach client importance of a complete workup prior to starting isotretinoin therapy and periodically during course of treatment.**
- **Instruct client:**
  - To report any decreased vision and discontinue use of isotretinoin.
  - To avoid driving at night if possible.
  - That use of artificial tears may relieve dry eyes.
  - That use of contact lenses may need to be discontinued during therapy.

### (Continued)
### NURSING PROCESS FOCUS  Clients Receiving Isotretinoin (Accutane) (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Client Education/Discharge Planning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Monitor skin problems. (This will determine the effectiveness of drug therapy.)</td>
<td>Advise client:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• That acne may worsen during beginning of treatment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To monitor skin for improvement in 4 to 8 weeks; if no improvement is noted, client should contact primary healthcare provider.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Monitor for side effects. (Side effects may point to potential complications and noncompliance with drug regimen.)</td>
<td>• Instruct client to be aware of and to report headache (especially if accompanied by nausea and vomiting), fatigue, depression, lethargy, severe diarrhea, rectal bleeding, abdominal pain, visual changes, dry mouth, hematuria, proteinuria, and liver dysfunction (jaundice, pruritus, dark urine).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Evaluation of Outcome Criteria

Evaluate the effectiveness of drug therapy by confirming that client goals and expected outcomes have been met (see “Planning”).

- The client reports decreased acne, without side effects or adverse reactions.
- The client verbalizes acceptance of body image.
- The client demonstrates an understanding of the drug’s action by accurately drug side effects and precautions.
- The client uses contraceptive measures to prevent pregnancy while taking medication.
- The client keeps all scheduled appointments and laboratory visits for testing.

### NURSING CONSIDERATIONS

The role of the nurse in drug therapy for acne-related disorders includes careful monitoring of a client’s condition and providing education as it relates to the prescribed drug treatment. Have the client undress so you can examine the extent of acne. Wear gloves when assessing the skin. Assess the anterior and posterior thorax, because many acne lesions may be found in these areas. Obtain a thorough history including onset of acne, treatments used and their effects, and whether the client is pregnant. Ask about allergies, past medical history, and current medications.

Isotretinoin (Accutane) is contraindicated in individuals with a history of depression and suicidal ideation and during pregnancy. Individuals who are prescribed isotretinoin should sign a consent regarding the understanding of suicidal risks prior to treatment. Obtain a pregnancy test in all female clients of childbearing years. Isotretinoin is also contraindicated for individuals taking carbamazepine for seizures because the drug may decrease the serum levels of carbamazepine, resulting in increased seizure activity. Use of isotretinoin with hypoglycemic agents may lead to a loss of glycemic control and cardiovascular risks, because isotretinoin raises serum triglyceride levels.

### Lifespan Considerations

Some acne medications are contraindicated during pregnancy because they may have teratogenic effects to the fetus. Therefore, verification of pregnancy in those individuals who are sexually active is critical in treatment. If assessing a teenager, rapport must be established, because many are embarrassed or have altered body image or low self-esteem issues related to their acne. Establishing rapport prior to assessing and taking a health history allows the client to become comfortable with answering questions.

**Client Teaching.** Client education as it relates to drugs used to treat acne should include the goals of therapy, the reasons for obtaining baseline data such as vital signs and the existence of underlying psychiatric disorders, and possible drug side effects. Include the following points when teaching clients about drugs to treat acne:

- Report use of any OTC medications or herbal supplements to treat acne.
- Take medications exactly as prescribed and for the designated length of time.
- Practice reliable contraception and notify your healthcare provider if pregnancy is planned or suspected.
- If breast-feeding, select a different method of feeding your baby while on medications to control acne. If you have stopped taking the acne medications, contact your healthcare provider to determine when breast-feeding may resume.
- Immediately report unusual bleeding, bruising, yellow coloration of the skin or eyes, pale stools, and darkened urine.
- If taking isotretinoin, do not donate blood for 30 days after discontinuing the medication.
- If taking isotretinoin and wearing contacts, unusual dryness of the eyes may be experienced while on this medication.
- Keep a food diary to determine foods that may make acne worse, and avoid those foods.