

SPIRONOLACTONE

Spirolactone is a pill that has been used to treat water retention for the past fifty years. In 1991, it was found to be highly effective in the treatment of hormonally related conditions in women. These are conditions that are generally NOT caused by abnormally high or low hormone levels. In fact, hormone levels are usually normal. The problem lies in how much hormone is used at its destination, in this case, your oil glands and hair follicles. If your oil glands and hair follicles over-react to normal fluctuations in your hormones, you may end up with any or all of the following:

- Adult Acne: This is NOT the same as teenage acne so it may not respond to standard acne treatments that are used for teenagers.
- Unwanted facial or body hair: The same hormones can cause hair LOSS on the scalp and hair GROWTH on other parts of the body. This is because different hair follicles have different hormone receptors.
- Female Pattern Hair Loss: Thinning of the hair occurs, mainly in the central area, however, women never go completely bald.

Spirolactone does not change your hormone levels, thus hormone related side effects are avoided. It works by preventing hormones from binding to your hair follicles and oil glands. After years of experience, side effects are rare; however, no drug is completely free of side effects. The use of birth control pills can prevent menstrual cramping and menstrual irregularities. Breast tenderness and fatigue have also been reported, but very few women actually experience these. The package insert also mentions reports of “tumors in laboratory animals”. This is a drug that has been used for many decades, with many people taking it daily and there is no evidence that it has caused a single tumor in a human.

Spirolactone should not affect your blood pressure if it is normal. If you are currently being treated for high blood pressure, you may be able to substitute spiro lactone for one or more of your current medications or it may increase the effects of your current medications. It SHOULD NOT be used with blood pressure medications known as ACE Inhibitors. Please make sure to ask your primary care doctor about any interactions between your current medications and spiro lactone. You may not be able to take Spirolactone if you have liver or kidney disease, or diabetes mellitus.

Before starting on Spirolactone we will draw some blood to make sure that the potassium in your body is normal, since taking this medication may cause potassium levels to rise. You will be checked at regular intervals.

Spirolactone should be taken regularly for at least four months to have a beneficial effect. You may remain on spiro lactone for many months or even years if its effects are beneficial.

If you have any questions about this medication please ask me before you leave the office.