Tretinoin (TRET I noyn)  
also know as All-trans-Retinoic Acid (ATRA)  
Patient Education

**US Brand Names:** Vesnoid  
**Therapeutic Category:** chemotherapy

**What is this medicine used for?**  
Used to treat Leukemia.

**How does it work?**  
ATRA works by killing blood cells. This particular drug is used to treat acute promyelocytic leukemia (APML).

**What should my doctor or nurse know before I take this medication?**
- If you are allergic to any medicines.  
- If you are taking other over-the-counter or prescription medicines, including vitamins and herbal remedies.  
- If you are, or may be pregnant.  
- If you are breast feeding.

**How is this drug given?**
- This medicine can be used alone or in combination with other cancer medicine.  
- This medicine is taken by mouth.  
- Take with meals.  
- Do not crush capsules.  
- Avoid alcohol while taking this medication.

**What are the general precautions when taking this medicine?**
- Talk with your doctor or nurse before taking aspirin, aspirin-containing products, over the counter or prescription medications, including vitamins and herbal remedies.  
- Drink 8 to 10 glasses of non-caffeinated liquid every day (unless told otherwise by your doctor or nurse).  
- If you or your partner can get pregnant, use birth control during your treatment. Once completing treatment, discuss the timing for discontinuing birth control measures with your provider. (See Patient Teaching Sheet: Fertility)

**What are the common side effects of this medicine?**
Retinoic acid-APL syndrome: fever, shortness of breath, weight gain, and chest pain. This syndrome usually occurs during the first month of treatment.

Elevated cholesterol: your cholesterol level will be monitored and should decrease when treatment stops.

Bone pain, body aches.

Dry skin and lips.

Headache.

Fever.

Myelosuppression (drop in number of blood cells) will cause a drop in the number of white blood cells in your body (Neutropenia). These cells fight infection. A drop in the number of these cells puts you at risk for infection. Talk to your doctor or nurse about your risk. Practice good hand washing and avoid people with infections, colds or flu when you are at risk. (pt. teaching sheet Neutropenia)

Danger signals to report immediately to your doctor or nurse:

- Signs or symptoms of infection. This includes a fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or greater, chills, severe sore throat, ear or sinus pain, cough, increased sputum or change in color, painful urination, mouth sores, wound that will not heal, or anal itching or pain.
- Severe nausea or vomiting or diarrhea not controlled by medication.
- Not able to eat or drink.
- Bleeding from your nose, mouth, gums, or in your urine or bowel movements. Bruising that does not heal.
- Feeling extremely tired, weak, dizzy or light headed.

How should I store this oral medicine?

- Keep all medicine out of reach of children & pets.
- Consult your pharmacist for instructions on storage and disposal of this medication.

What do I do if I miss an oral dose?
Contact your doctor or nurse. Do not make up a skipped dose without discussing with your health care team.