

Acne

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Acne is due to an overactivity and plugging of the oil glands. More than 90 percent of teenagers have some acne. Acne is caused mainly by increased levels of hormones during adolescence.

Acne is not caused by diet. A person who has acne does not have to avoid eating fried foods, chocolate, or any other food. Acne is not caused by sexual activity or inactivity. It is not caused by dirt or by not washing your face often enough. The tops of blackheads are black because of the chemical reaction of the oil plug with the air. Acne usually lasts until age 20 or even 25.

Home care

Good skin care can keep acne under control and at a mild level.

Wash your skin twice a day. The most important time to wash is bedtime. Use a mild soap such as Dove soap. Avoid harsh or gritty soaps or cleaners as this may irritate the skin further. Remember to shampoo your hair daily because oily hair can leave oil on your skin.

Avoid picking pimples. Picking stops acne from healing. It is better not to pop pimples. Scarring can result from popping large pimples.

Your doctor may recommend benzoyl peroxide, an excellent medicine that helps unplug skin pores and also fight off acne-causing bacteria. It ranges in concentration from 2.5% to 10%, and comes in gel, cream, and lotion. It may irritate your skin at first if not used properly and started SLOWLY. An amount the size of a pea should be enough to cover your face. If your skin becomes too red or peels, use a lower concentration and use it less often.

Days 1-3: apply small amount in morning, leave on 15 minutes, then wash off.

Days 4-6: apply small amount in morning, leave on 30 minutes, then wash off.

Days 7-9: apply small amount in morning or evening, leave on 1 hour, then wash.

Day 10: leave on all night, then rinse in the morning.

Remember, this medication can sometimes bleach clothes. Also, be careful when exercising, as sweat may spread the medication to your clothing as well as leaving oily or greasy substances on your face or hair. Oily and greasy substances make acne worse by blocking oil glands.

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If you must use cover-up cosmetics, use water-based (the bottle may read “noncomedogenic”). Wash off all cosmetics at bedtime.

If your doctor prescribes antibiotic to take by mouth

- Tetracycline must be taken on an empty stomach to work, at least 30 minutes before eating or 2 hours afterward. It helps to take a glass of water with tetracycline.
- If you are taking tetracycline or especially doxycycline, be very careful to avoid direct sun and always use sunscreen, as the medicine may cause a sunburn reaction.
- Some antibiotics may decrease the effectiveness of birth control pills. If you are taking birth control pills, make sure your doctor knows.

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