

Acne

Definition

- Acne is a skin condition caused by blocked oil glands
- Main symptoms are pimples and blackheads on the face

Health Information

Symptoms

- Whiteheads (pimples) are plugged oil glands that are closed.
- Blackheads are plugged oil glands that are open. Reason: The oil turns black when it is exposed to air.
- Whiteheads and blackheads are also called "zits".
- Red bumps are blocked oil glands that have leaked. This causes irritation in the skin around them. Larger red bumps can be quite painful.
- Acne mainly appears on your face, neck, and shoulders

Cause

- Acne is caused by plugged oil glands. Increased levels of hormones during puberty have a part. Heredity also plays an important role.
- Some skin bacteria can make it worse.
- Acne is not caused by diet. You do not need to avoid eating fried foods, chocolate, or any other food.
- Acne is not caused by dirt or by not washing your face often enough.

Care Advice

1. Overview:

- More than 80% of teenagers have some acne.
- There is no medicine at this time that will cure acne.
- However, good skin care can keep acne under control and at a mild level.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

2. Benzoyl Peroxide Lotion or Gel:

- Benzoyl Peroxide (BP) is the best medicine for bringing acne under control. It helps to open pimples and to unplug blackheads. It also kills bacteria. No prescription is needed. Ask your pharmacist to recommend a brand.
- Apply the lotion once a day at bedtime. Redheads and blonds should apply it every other day for the first 2 weeks. Reason: More sensitive skin.
- Use an amount of lotion the size of a pea. This should be enough to cover most of your face. If your skin becomes red or peels, use less of it. Other option: You can use it less often.
- Caution: Benzoyl peroxide bleaches clothing, carpets, etc. Apply it only at bedtime and put it on sparingly. Use a plain white pillowcase.

3. Antibiotics for Red Bumps:

- Large red bumps mean the infection has spread beyond the oil gland. If you have several red bumps, your doctor may prescribe an antibiotic.
- Antibiotics come as solutions for the skin or as pills.
- The antibiotic will kill the bacteria that are causing the infection.
- Give the antibiotic as directed.

4. **Washing the Face:**

- Wash your skin twice a day. The most important time to wash is bedtime. Just use warm water or you can use a mild soap such as Dove.
- Shampoo your hair daily.
- Avoid scrubbing your skin. Reason: Hard scrubbing of the skin irritates the openings of the oil glands. This causes them to close even more tightly.

5. **Pimple Opening:**

- Opening (popping) pimples is not advised by doctors. But, most teens and adults do it anyway. The key is doing it safely.
- Never open a pimple before it has come to a head.
- Wash your face and hands first.
- Use a sterile needle (cleaned with rubbing alcohol). Nick the surface of the yellow pimple with the tip of the needle. The pus should run out without squeezing.
- Wipe away the pus and wash the area with soap and water.
- This should help it heal faster.

6. **Prevention: Avoid Triggers of Acne:**

- Avoid picking and squeezing. Picking keeps acne from healing. Squeezing causes bleeding into the skin and blotches that can last a month.
- Avoid squeezing boils or other large, red, tender bumps. Reason: can cause a serious face infection.
- Avoid putting any oily or greasy substances on your face. Reason: They block oil glands and make acne worse. If you use cosmetics, use water-based cosmetics.
- Avoid hair tonics or hair creams (especially greasy ones). When you sweat, they will get on the face and irritate the acne.

7. **What to Expect:**

- With treatment, new whiteheads and blackheads will decrease after 6 to 8 weeks.
- Acne will last through the teen years or later.
- So, you will need to continue the treatment for several years.
- You don't need to worry about scarring. It is very rare for acne to leave any scars.

Call Your Doctor If

- With treatment, the acne has not improved after 2 months
- It looks infected (large, red, tender bumps)
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

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