



Acne Facts You Need to Know

These are some things you can do to help control your acne.

Get enough rest and reduce your stress. Stress stimulates the adrenal gland and in the acne-prone individual, the adrenal gland promotes oil production which leads to clogged pores.

Stay away from foods, vitamin supplements and sports drinks/bars containing iodides. Iodized salt, seafood, fish, seaweed, fast foods and dairy products (cows lick iodized salt licks) and especially kelp tablets (some people take these for thyroid support) are a part of this list. See iodine content in foods handout for a more complete list. Contrary to popular notion, chocolate and greasy foods (unless they contain salt, which most do) do not aggravate acne.

Stay away from "high androgen" foods. These are found in peanuts, peanut oil, peanut butter, corn oil, wheat germ, shellfish, organ meats, sweetbreads, beef and liver. These contain hormones that exacerbate acne.

Some swimming pool disinfectants contain Iodides and Chlorine, which can remain in the water, causing skin problems for frequent swimmers. Many swimmers find that the combination of hot and humid weather, the physical exercise of swimming and the chlorinated pools, can cause major acne flare-ups.

Don't pick. Instead of picking, rub ice on pustules and pimples for about five minutes, twice a day. Try to catch them when they are first forming and they most likely will go away. Put Clarate spot treatment a few times during the day and/or Acne Mask on the pustule at night. You can also use Benzoyl Peroxide for this, but the surrounding tissue may get very dry.

According to the results of a number of clinical trials, **zinc** has been shown to be useful in treating acne. Some research has found zinc to be as effective as antibiotics in reducing inflamed acne. Research indicates that the form of zinc taken maybe important. Studies have indicated that zinc monomethionine is more easily used by the body than either zinc sulfate or zinc gluconate. It is usually best to take zinc with food. Recommended dosage for supplements vary (50-100 mg) - but some research suggests that it is probably best to take no more than 100 mg per day as a dietary supplement (excessive zinc intake may lead to deficiencies in other vitamins and minerals. **It is best to take this with food and not on an empty stomach.** An online source for zinc monomethionine is <http://www.starherb.com>

Use fragrance-free detergents such as Cheer Free, All Free & Clear, Tide Free or Arm & Hammer Free. **Do not use fabric softeners and/or fabric softener sheets in the dryer, especially on pillowcases as they cause a waxy residue that can clog pores on acne-prone individuals.**

Avoid low-estrogen birth control pills, Norplant, Provera, and Depo-Provera. Also progesterone hormone replacement Premarin can be problematic. If you have polycystic ovaries, they will cause hormonal changes and breakout. See handout about birth control pills for more information. Also, the taking of birth control pills may delay the onset of acne and once off them, you may experience the acne you would've had before taking them.

Do not use cosmetics OR hair products that contain pore-clogging ingredients. These ingredients cause microcomedones to form in certain individuals resulting in various lesions ranging from clogged pores and blackheads to inflammatory pustules. If you have doubts about yours, let us see the ingredient listing. **Isopropyl myristate, cetyl alcohol, sodium lauryl sulfate, laureth-4, natural Vitamin E, most natural oils, cocoa butter and D & C red dyes all agitate acne.**

Benzoyl Peroxide medications found at cosmetic departments may contain isopropyl myristate and laureth-4 or oils that impede the active ingredient of benzoyl peroxide. Watch out for "oil-free" products. They contain synthetic oils (fatty acids), D&C red dyes and detergents that can aggravate acne. See the handout on Pore Clogging Ingredients in Skin Care for a complete list.

Limit sun exposure and use a sunscreen. Although sun exposure causes desirable scaling and drying, it also damages the follicle, exacerbates hyper pigmentation, causes skin cancer and premature aging and can cause "solar acne" later in life, as well as "Acne Majorca" also caused by sunlight. Warm climates with heat and humidity can exacerbate acne.

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