

Education

ACNE

ACNE IS DEFINED AS BLACKHEADS, WHITEHEADS (PIMPLES), OR RED BUMPS ON THE FACE, NECK AND/OR SHOULDERS. ACNE IS CAUSED BY THE PLUGGING OF OIL GLANDS DUE TO THE INCREASED LEVEL OF HORMONES PRODUCED DURING ADOLESCENCE. SOMETIMES GENETICS OR CERTAIN MEDICATIONS MAY BE THE CAUSE.

- * Acne is not caused by diet, so it is unnecessary to restrict certain foods (e.g. chocolate)
- * Acne is most commonly noted on the face and back.
- * Poor hygiene is not a cause of acne, but excessive oils +/- rubbing can worsen acne
- * Acne usually lasts until 18 to 20 years of age (It can persist through adulthood).
- * It is rare, but possible for acne to cause scarring
- * Good skin care may keep acne under control and at a mild level

HOME TREATMENT

- * Soap: wash face twice daily and after exercise with mild soap (eg. Dove)
- * Hair: wash daily as it may make acne worse by contributing excess oil to the skin
- * Change pillow case 2-3 times weekly
- * AVOID picking and popping pimples as this may cause a secondary infection and/or scarring.
- * Use "non-comedogenic" make-up and moisturizers
- * Some over-the-counter products may be helpful:
- * Benzoyl peroxide lotions, gel, or washes: this helps to open pimples and unplug blackheads. It also kills bacteria and dries skin. The lotion causes less drying of the skin than the gel. Begin with the 5% lotion and apply a thin layer to the entire area where pimples occur; once nightly for a week, then twice a day. NOTE: often there is bleaching of sheets and clothing.
- * Medicated soaps (eg. Neutrogena)

PRESCRIPTION PRODUCTS:

- * When over-the-counter products are not helping to control acne or you feel the acne is not being controlled to your expectations, it may be time to try some prescription topical products or even consult a dermatologist if topical products are not helping.
- * Keratolytics: these medications help the skin layers to shed away quicker (eg. Differin, Retin-A, Tazorac). Typically after 4 to 8 weeks of use, there may be a flare-up as underlying pimple are uncovered. It is important to be patient during this flare-up as it will not last. Always use a sunscreen, preferably between a rating of 15 and 30, on skin that has been treated with these medications.
- * Topical antibacterial agents (eg. Erythromycin, Clindamycin)
- * Combination products (eg. Benzamycin, Benaclin, Duac, Epiduo)
- * Oral antibiotics (eg. Minocycline, Tetracycline, Erythromycin)

CALL BACK IF:

- * The acne appears to be infected: large, red, tender lump with possible oozing
- * Acne has not improved after treatment with benzoyl peroxide for 4-6 weeks
- * The face becomes itchy or swollen
- * Hives occur
- * Blackheads or scarring are noted.