

Acne is a common skin disorder that involves the skin's oil producing glands and hair follicles. Acne is caused by a build-up of debris, including dead skin cells, in the hair follicle causing an obstruction of the oil flow and bacteria. This build-up results in the formation of "whiteheads" or "blackheads" more commonly known as acne.

The aggravating factors that may increase the occurrence of acne:

- Stress, including difficulties in relationships, fatigue, poor eating habits, lack of exercise, and/or illness.
- Hormones that stimulate oil production, which is why acne begins at puberty.
- Friction/sweating, especially the combination, can lead to acne. Hand-to-face contact is a common source of friction.
- Cosmetics/skin products, mainly oil based products that can clog pores.
- Medicines such as steroids, some asthma medications, anti-epilepsy medicines, INH, and lithium (used to treat some forms of depression).
- Nutritional supplements that have iodine.

The treatment of acne includes the following: If acne fails to improve, seek a medical consult)

- Wash the skin twice a day with a mild soap.
- Avoid excessive scrubbing.
- Use water-based or dermatological safe cosmetics only.
- DO NOT pick or squeeze acne lesions.
- Use over-the-counter medication containing benzyl peroxide.
- Keep your skin clean. Using a clean washcloth every time, work the soap into your skin gently for a minute or two and rinse well.
- Try an astringent lotion, de-greasing pads, or a face scrub.
- Ask your healthcare provider for the name of a good acne soap.
- Leave your skin alone! Don't squeeze, scratch, or poke at pimples. They can get infected and leave scars.
- Use an over-the-counter lotion or cream that has benzoyl peroxide. Try a little on your arm first to make sure it does not hurt your skin as some people are allergic to benzoyl peroxide.
- Wash after you exercise or sweat.
- Wash your hair at least twice a week and keep it off your face.
- Do not spend too much time in the sun. Do not use a sun lamp.
- Use only water-based makeup. Do not use greasy or oily creams, lotions, or make-ups.
- When self-care is not enough, a medical practitioner may prescribe topical ointments, Retin A cream or gel, and/or antibiotics.
- No matter what special treatments your provider may use, remember that you must continue proper skin care until the tendency to have acne has passed. There is no instant or permanent cure for acne, but it is controllable, and proper treatment may prevent scars.

Resources: <http://www.aad.org/public/Publications/pamphlets/Acne.htm>