

Acne

What is acne?

Acne is a skin condition. It includes plugged oil glands (blackheads and whiteheads), pimples and deeper lumps (nodules). Acne occurs on the face, neck, chest, back, shoulders and even the upper arms. It is most often seen during adolescence but it can occur at any age. During adolescence, acne is caused by an increased amount of, or an increased sensitivity to male hormone levels.



Can it be cured?

Acne cannot be cured. It can be controlled with medicine and treatment. Treating acne will also help prevent scarring.

How long will it take to improve?

It may take 8 to 12 weeks to see an improvement in your acne. Treating acne is a slow process. During the first few weeks of treatment you may notice that your acne seems to get worse. This is because the medicine is working on pimples that you may not yet see. Be patient, do not get discouraged. Continue to use your medicine as directed. If you do not feel well and you are taking medicine, call your doctor or nurse.

How should I clean my skin?

Clean your skin gently. Wash your face with warm water two times every day. Use just your fingertips. Do not rub your face with a washcloth or towel. Blot your skin dry. Too much washing, scrubbing, rubbing or wiping can make your acne worse.

What kind of soap should I use to clean my skin?

Use a mild soap to wash if your skin is dry from the acne medicines. Use an antibacterial soap such as Dial® or Lever 2000® if it is oily. Other good soaps are Neutrogena® and Cetaphil® bar soaps. Over use of scrubbing granules, abrasive cleansers or rough puffs can cause your acne to get worse. Do not use medicated soaps when using prescription medicines.

How can I hide the dry or peeling skin?

- Use a facial non-comedogenic moisturizing lotion with SPF. “Non-comedogenic” means that the product will not plug your pores and cause your acne to get worse.
- Gently exfoliate dry skin with a firm facial sponge.
- Gently wash the dry areas using soap with beads.
- Use acne medicines every other day instead of every day. It may take several weeks for your skin to get used to new acne medicine. The dryness, peeling and irritation should improve within a few weeks.

How can I protect my skin from the sun?

Some medicines that are used to treat acne cause your skin to be more sensitive to the sun. Use a sunscreen with an SPF #15 or greater when your skin is exposed to the sun. Reapply the sunscreen often. When you buy sunscreen, look for the word non-comedogenic on the label.

Can I use moisturizer?

Most acne medicines that are put on the skin (topical) and Accutane® are drying. A fragrance-free, non-comedogenic moisturizer can be used if your skin is dry. Look for a face moisturizer with an SPF of 15 or higher.



Can I use makeup?

Makeup can be used, but should be water-based and non-comedogenic. Oil-based makeup may plug your pores.

What are some of the things that cause acne to get worse?

- Sports activities:
 - There may be rubbing or friction from headgear.
 - You may wipe or rub your face more often with your hand, arm or a towel.
 - There may be friction during weight-lifting activities.
- Picking, squeezing, scratching or scrubbing acne. This can lead to bacterial infection. It may also lead to permanent scarring and an increase in the size and number of pimples.
- Sitting with your hands or arms touching your face.
- Holding the phone against your face.
- Emotional stress or tension.
- Hormonal changes.

What about over-the-counter acne products?

Always check with the doctor before using non-prescription products on your skin while you are getting medical treatment. Some over-the-counter products cause more irritation of your skin. If you are using prescription cream or gel for you acne, do not use over-the-counter products that contain salicylic acid, alpha-hydroxy acid or benzoyl peroxide.

Does eating chocolate cause acne?

Hormones cause acne. Eating chocolate, greasy foods or soft drinks does not cause acne. A healthy diet is recommended though.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child:

- Has any side effects from any medicine.
- Has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.