

# Acne Treatment - Information & Tips

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Acne is a common problem faced by almost all teen-agers and youth. What is acne and why do we get them. Acne is actually caused because of hormone imbalance. Your skin breaks out because of a hormone called testosterone. Both men and women have testosterone in their systems. In fact, did you know that in order to make testosterone, boys bodies have to make female hormones first? If you have acne, you haven't got abnormal levels of testosterone. You've got skin that reacts abnormally to this hormone. You start producing testosterone around the time you start sprouting body hair. Testosterone tells glands in your skin, called sebaceous glands, to produce oily stuff called sebum. To add to the problem the inside of the tubes that hold each hair become gummy and get partially blocked - giving you blackheads. Put together if sebum blocks the tubes, you have big acne.

So go to your pharmacist or doctor to get your acne treated. Here are a few tips that will help you know how to treat acne at home.

If you have red angry looking acne, don't touch it. If you squeeze now, all you'll do is force the contents deeper into the skin that will make matters worst. And all you'll end up with is redder, angrier acne than you had before. Don't do it.

If you have a yellow custard top? Go for it. These beauties can be squeezed but there's an art to it. Here's how. Wash your hands thoroughly to avoid trouble and infection. Put a tissue over your finger. Why? Because you want the contents of the spot on the tissue, not splattered all over the mirror. Using the side of your thumb and the end of your finger, very gently start to squeeze. Don't whatever you do, use your nails as this will damage your skin. Stop when you're applying a lot of pressure and nothing is happening and you see clear fluid, rather than yellow grotty stuff and the spot begins to bleed. When you've finished dab it with antiseptic. Once the custard bit is out, the spot will heal more quickly than an unsqueezed yellow top would, providing that you now leave it well alone. Now wash your hands again.

Whiteheads and blackheads. If acne is left untreated they may cause this problem. Here the rule is if they're black, squeeze but if they're small, white raised lumps leave them alone. All that stuff about clean hands, tissues and stopping if nothing is happening or you see blood, apply here too.

## Tips for Acne Treatment

### 1. Don't try to wash it away

Acne isn't caused by dirt. In fact people with oily skin have cleaner skin than average because they wash it more often. But it's a fact that washing too much can make acne worse because it makes the skin dry and sore. So, wash no more than twice a day, using mild soap and water. If you have patches of dry skin, don't worry about putting moisturizer on. It won't make your acne worse. If you're still concerned, use an oil free moisturizer.

## **2. Don't nuke them**

There are lots of over the counter creams, gels, lotions and potions. Most contain a powerful bleaching agent called benzoyl peroxide. You'll find the strength written on the label. You might be tempted to go straight for the highest sort, working on the let's nuke them principle. The likely result is that you'll irritate your skin like mad. It may also go all dry and scaly on you. But if you still are willing to bleach then use the mild one.

## **3. Make a date - The two month rule**

If you have been using over the counter remedies for two months and there is no real improvement in your spots, this is the moment to go and make an appointment with your skin specialist doctor.

## **4. Your doctor - The two month rule**

The thing you are most likely to be given by the doctor is a prescription for antibiotics. These will either be topical (which means something you put on your skin) or tablets you have to take every day. Whatever treatment your doctor or pharmacist recommends, follow the instructions carefully and keep using for at least two months. There should be a noticeable improvement by this time. If not, go back to discuss other possible treatments Antibiotics are perfectly safe to take. You should take them for at least two months and then go back to your doctor. If they seem to be working, he will probably tell you to keep taking them and give you some more. If they aren't doing their stuff, don't despair - he has loads of other spot busters in his black bag.

## **5. Just be patient**

Hundreds of thousands of teenagers seek help for acne. You are not alone. You are not an alien. And if people really care about you, they don't even notice your acne, however bad you think they are. But you will need to be patient. Most treatments take time to work. At least two months. And some treatments, like antibiotics will work well but may have to be taken for months, or even years.

## **6. The monthly curse**

Acne does tend to get worse just before a period. It's because there is a surge in hormone levels at this time. But boys don't get away lightly either. Being hot and sweaty (particularly after sports like football) makes acne worse.

## **7. Be careful about Beauty Products**

Some beauty products are big no. These include pomades and defrizzing agents for hair that tend to cause an outcrop of blackheads along the hairline and some of the heavier cosmetics. And be wary of suntan oils. Not all will make you break out, but some may. Try a friend's first before you buy. By the way, the sun might dry up acne and a tan might hide them, but your skin is still vulnerable in the sun and needs protection.