

# About Acne - What can you do to cure or alleviate acne?

By Knut Holt

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Acne gives the combination of symptoms like greasy skin, white heads, black heads, pimples, inflammation and scar formation. Acne mostly affects young people in the age 14 - 25, but also sometimes older persons, like women in their menopause. Most teenagers experience outburst of acne, some only little, but for others acne may develop into a serious skin ailment with great cosmetic impact.

## THE SKIN ANATOMY

To understand the acne process, some knowledge about skin anatomy and physiology is essential:

The skin has three layers: The outer layer, called epidermis, consists of epithelial cells. Under this lies the dermis consisting of connective tissue. At the bottom there is a layer called the hypodermis consisting mostly of fat cells.

The skin has narrow pores extending from the surface down to the top of the subdermis, called hair follicles. A hair extends from a growth zone in the bottom of each hair follicle and out at the skin surface. Around the hair in the dermis, there are small glands called sebaceous glands. These glands produce a fatty substance, sebum, which empties through the follicle opening and lubricates the hair and the skin.

## THE ACNE PROCESS

Acne starts by the glands in the hair follicles increasing their sebum production. This will in the beginning only cause greasy skin. Eventually the sebum in the entrance of the follicles mixes with dead epithelial cells from the epidermis. This mix reacts chemically to form hard plugs, comedones, that close the pore entrances. According to the color of the comedones, they are called black heads or white heads.

Then the closed hair follicle gets filled with sebum and swells. The swollen follicle then gets infected by bacteria. The bacteria and the accumulated sebum cause the follicle and the surrounding skin to get inflamed, forming a pimple. At last the inflamed follicle bursts and empties its content. Eventually the affected area heals. Sometimes the inflammation reaches deep into the skin surrounding the follicle and destroys skin tissue. This will cause more or less distinct scars that may reside permanently. Typically an affected person will have follicles in all these stages of the process at any given time.

## THE CAUSES OF ACNE

The increased hormone production in the puberty stimulates to increased sebum production. The

male hormone, testosterone, seem to contribute most. Also girls begin to produce more testosterone in the puberty. Also in other periods, altered hormone production may give acne, for example by women in the menopause.

Since not all teens get acne in any degree, the increased hormone level cannot be the whole cause of the increased sebum production. The follicles of affected persons must for some reason react stronger upon the higher hormone level.

Dietary factors, like eating too much fat, too much sugar or the wrong kind of fat may aggravate acne by some individuals. Lack of vitamins, minerals and essential fatty acids may also contribute to development of acne.

Poor digestion, lazy colon and constipation aggravate acne in some individuals, probably due to productions of toxins in the intestines. Lazy colon may be caused by dietary faults, like lack of fiber.

Very frequent washing and use of strong soaps aggravate acne, and does not alleviate the condition as many think. Rubbing, scrubbing or squeezing the skin may also aggravate acne.

Here are some other factors that may contribute in causing acne or aggravating the condition.

- Stress
- Some contraceptive agents
- Environmental or domestic pollution.
- Humid environments.
- Some antidepressants.
- Testosterone and anabolic steroids used for treatment or by body-building.
- Use of some types of greasy cosmetic products.
- Some antiperspirant products.
- Exposing the skin for chlorine or other halogens, or medicines containing halogens.
- Women may get aggravated acne 2-7 days before menstruation.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO YOURSELF TO AVOID OR TO TREAT ACNE

Sometimes Acne is so severe that special medical treatment is required, and sometimes the causes of acne necessitate medical treatment. But you can do much yourself also. Here are listed things you can do yourself to prevent or treat acne:

### 1. Some advices about diet that may help prevent and cure acne:

- Do not consume a great amount of fat.
- The fat you add to the food should be natural oils. Olive oil is ideal, but use other types of oils too, like walnut oil, sunflower oil and soy oil. However, do not use only soy oil as many tend to do. Using only soy oil will give you too much of some fatty acids and too less of others.
- Eat much fish, seafood and not so much meat.
- Eat food with a high fiber content to regulate the digestion, like vegetables, whole cereals, full corn bread and fruit.

### 2. Here are some things you should avoid.

- Do not use greasy or heavy cosmetics that clog your skin and are difficult to wash away.
- Do not use strong irritating antiperspirants.

- Do not wash with strong soap or cleaners that dry up your skin and take away all the natural oily protection in your skin.
- If you perform body-building, do not use anabolic steroids or other hormonal supplements.
- Use clothes that allow air to reach your body surface to avoid collection of humidity and overheating of your skin.

### 3. Use of rinsing milk or solutions

You can rinse your skin with mild products especially made to dissolve the plugs in your pores, and to make the environment in your skin unfriendly to bacteria causing infection. Some of these products are just products to wash your skin with one or more times a day; others should be on during night and flushed away in the morning.

Salicylic acid is a mild ingredient often used in these products to dissolve the comedones. The products usually also contain ingredients that work antibacterial and stimulate the skin's own cleaning activities, like Tea tree oil or Echinacea extract.

### 4. Use of gels and creams to treat acne and protect your skin

After the rinsing, you should apply some treatment gel, cream or lotion onto your skin to achieve these effects:

- To make your skin soft and elastic.
- To protect your skin against the environment.
- To act further to dissolve the clogging of your pores.
- To soothe and alleviate inflammation.
- To kill the bacteria causing infection or make an environment hostile for the bacteria.
- To stimulate the skin to clean itself.
- To stimulate the skin to heal.
- To be used as an isolating layer between the skin itself and cosmetics

In order to protect, make the skin soft and further dissolve the comedones, many products contain natural plant oils that are easily absorbed into the epidermis, like Tea tree oil, Rose hip oil, Lavender oil and Olive oil.

Ingredients used in products to reduce inflammation and to stimulate healing may be: Aloe Vera extract, Viola Tricolour extract, Rose hip oil, Vitamin E and Vitamin A.

Tea tree oil and Grapefruit seed extract are natural antibacterial agents used in many of these products. In other products artificial compounds like Benzoyl peroxide are used.

### 5. Oral supplements to fight the acne process and nourish the skin

Supplements taken by mouth to nourish your skin may be useful. The purpose of these supplements is more or less the same as that of nourishing creams.

- To make the sebum more fluid so it drains more easily.
- To stimulate the substance exchange and cleaning processes in your skin,
- To stimulate your skin to heal,
- To give your skin building nutrients necessary to heal.

Ingredients often used in these supplements to stimulate the cleaning and healing processes in the skin are: Vitamins A, C, B1, B2, B3, B6, C, D, E, Folic acid, Beta carotene, Bioflavonoids, Magnesium, Copper, Zinc, selenium, anti-oxidants from Green tea, Metylsulfonyl methane.

Nutrient found in these products used as material to rebuild damaged skin and to give a sebum with better consistency are: Evening primrose oil, Olive oil, Flax seed oil, Borage oil, Soy oil, Wheat germ oil and Lecithin.

Gum guggul extract used in oral products has an anti-biotic effect, and helps against spreading of the acne infection and thus helps against scar formation.

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Knut Holt is an internet consultant and marketer focusing on health items. TO FIND innovative medicines against acne, eczema, scars, wrinkles, other skin problems and natural anti-aging supplements for the skin and the whole body, VISIT THIS SITE:---

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