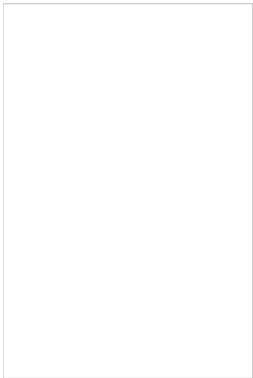


6 Dos and Don'ts for Treating Teen Acne



When your oil glands go into overdrive, your pores can get clogged, causing acne and pimples to appear. Fortunately, these scientific strategies can help you tame breakouts.

Teenagers are no strangers to acne (also known as pimples, zits, and blemishes). Indeed, acne is widespread, affecting about 8 in 10 adolescents, according to KidsHealth.

But what exactly *is* teen acne? And more importantly, why does pimples appear?

"Teen acne is a skin condition that causes bumps and pimples on the face, back, and chest. They are commonly referred to as whiteheads, blackheads, pimples, pustules, and cysts," says Elise I. Brantley, medical doctor, a board-certified dermatologist with the Skin Cancer Center of Oklahoma in Oklahoma City.

To understand why teen acne happens and pimples appear, however, you first need to understand how the skin works. As Dr. Brantley further notes, sebaceous glands (also known as oil glands), make a natural moisturizer for your skin called sebum.

Sebum is good for the skin, acting as a lubricant and a protectant, according to the American Chemical Society (ACS).

But sebum can also clog your hair follicles, also known as pores, making the skin "sticky" and difficult to shed. This combination of sebum, dead skin cells, and bacteria within a clogged pore is what causes a pimple, says Kara Shah, medical doctor, a board-certified general and pediatric dermatologist with Kenwood Dermatology in Cincinnati.

Don't Underestimate the Emotional Toll of Acne

In the past, some doctors and parents underestimated how much teen acne and pimples can affect a young person's outlook on life, their social adjustment, and even their school performance. Today, we know that pimples can cause scarring not just on the skin, but also on the psyche, according to the MayoClinic.

The American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) notes that teen acne and pimples can result in low self-esteem and self-confidence, poor body image, social withdrawal, and even depression, anger, and

anxiety. For a study published in the September–October 2016 issue of the *Indian Journal of Dermatology*, researchers surveyed 100 people age 15 and older on the psychosocial effects of pimples. Although the study was small and conducted in a hospital setting, participants reported that the severity of their acne and pimples, and the dark spots left behind by the acne, had affected their social activities. They also reported that the site and severity of their acne led them to feel embarrassed, and that they changed the way they dressed depending on where the pimples popped up, among other effects.

Similarly, a review of 13 studies that was published in March 2018 in the *International Journal of Women's Dermatology* suggests that pimples have a “substantial negative impact on patients’ self-esteem.” More research is needed, but the authors also note that people with pimples are at a higher risk for attempting suicide compared with those without the skin condition.

Acne can be especially challenging when teens deal with bullying or name-calling as a result of perceived imperfections on their skin. The AAD further notes that the “longer acne lasts, the more likely it is to affect one’s emotions.”

The good news is that there’s no short supply of practical information on how to treat and manage teen acne.

1. Do Choose a Mild Cleanser and Warm Water

Choose a mild cleanser, to avoid over-drying the skin. This is particularly important if you’re using prescription creams and other cosmetics from your doctor, says Dr. Brantley. Don’t scrub with a washcloth; use fingertips and wash the face gently, according to the AAD.

Just don’t overdo it: Washing your face once in the morning and once at night is enough. Teen pimples are not caused by a dirty face. In fact, washing your face too much can make pimples worse, warns the AAD.

The temperature of the water is also important. Interestingly, the National Health Service (NHS) recommends washing and rinsing the face with warm water, not cold or hot water, which can worsen acne.

2. Don’t Use Over-the-Counter Medication Alone to Treat Severe Acne

Existing pimples take time to heal, about four to eight weeks with medication, the Mayo Clinic notes. For mild acne, topical creams, gels, lotions, and other cosmetics can help unblock pores and reduce bacteria, thus improving the skin’s appearance. But moderate or severe pimples will likely require an oral acne medication, such as antibiotics, isotretinoin or birth control pills for women.

Work with your dermatologist to find the right acne pimple medication for the degree of acne you have. “Use your acne medication only as directed by your doctor,” warns Brantley. “Don’t use over-the-counter acne treatments in addition to your prescriptions without checking with your doctor. It is important to keep your skin in a healthy balance, and with acne treatments and other cosmetics, more is not always better,” she says.

3. Do Moisturize Daily With Oil-Free and Noncomedogenic Products

"Cosmetics, such as mild daily moisturizer lotion or cream can be beneficial, especially if you're using drying prescription creams from your doctor," advises doctor Brantley. "But don't use heavy ointments or grease. These can further clog pores and aggravate acne," she says.

The AAD suggests using a moisturizer that's labeled oil-free and noncomedogenic, which means it won't create comedones, the blackheads and whiteheads that clog pores. Apply moisturizer right after applying acne face medication.

4. Don't Ever Sleep With Your Makeup On

Remove your makeup and cosmetics every night with gentle cleansing. "Sleeping with your makeup will clog your skin pores, cause acne breakouts and pimples," warns Yoram Harth, medical doctor, a dermatologist and medical director of MDacne in San Francisco.

By the way: Don't use more makeup and cosmetics than you need during the day, suggests the NHS, and apply cosmetics after you put on your acne medication.

The type of makeup and cosmetics you opt for also matters. "These days most makeup brands are acne-friendly for people dealing with pimples. The words to look for are 'noncomedogenic' and 'oil-free,'" says Brantley. Some makeup options include flesh-tinted lotions to hide pimples, and an oil-free foundation.

5. Do Choose Nonoil Hair Products and Shampoos, Which May Touch Your Face

"Take care with applying hair products and hair cosmetics, such as shampoos," says Brantley. Products that come in contact with your face (for example, a shampoo) may further clog pores and make your acne flare, she warns. KidsHealth recommends avoiding hair-care products that add oil to your hair. It also helps to keep hair off your face and forehead, and to wash your hair every day with a shampoo. If you've started to shave, use care to avoid nicking pimples. When dealing with acne, an electric razor may work better than a razor blade, suggests John Hopkins All Children's Hospital.

6. Don't Pop or Pick at Your Pimples — Doing So Will Do More Harm Than Good

"No matter how hard we try, breakouts will happen and new pimples will appear. The most important thing to remember is to avoid popping pimples or picking your acne," warns Brantley. "This can raise the chance of scarring, and it also takes longer for them to heal." And while you might feel like hiding your pimples, keep your hands away from your face. That's just another way of spreading oils that can clog your pores.

7. Don't Spend Too Much Time in the Sun Without Sunscreen

Hanging out at the beach or pool might be the perfect way to enjoy a hot day; just know that too much sun worsens acne in some people, says the Mayo Clinic.

Too much exposure can damage your skin and increase inflammation, making you susceptible to

breakouts. And if you're taking acne medication, the AAD warns that some of these drugs can make your skin more sensitive to the sun's UV rays. This can lead to a blistering sunburn, so always protect your skin.

Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen or cosmetics, such as face cream with SPF, and look for physical sunscreens and face creams with SPF that are less likely to cause skin irritation, according to the Mayo Clinic. It helps to avoid tanning beds, too.

A Final Word on Preventing and Managing Teen Acne

"Most preteens and teenagers will get acne and pimples at some point," says Brantley. Even though hormones and genes play a big role in teen acne and the appearance of pimples, adopting good skin-care habits can get rid of pimples and prevent the emotional and physical scars of acne.

If necessary, work with your doctor to find the right pimple medication and cosmetics. Discuss possible therapies with your dermatologist or primary care physician, and make sure you understand all potential side effects before starting a treatment, recommends Shah.

#acne #pimples #cosmetics #shampoo

<https://www.everydayhealth.com/kids-health-pictures/teen-acne-pimple-dos-and-donts.aspx>