

Caring for Your Acne

Acne

Acne is caused by a combination of bacteria, hormones and clogged pores; not a dirty face. *Harsh cleansers, astringents, vigorous scrubbing, and aggressive squeezing may actually worsen the condition.*

For ongoing acne skin care and prevention of acne, follow a few simple guidelines:

- Clean skin gently—Use a mild skin cleanser twice a day and pat skin dry. *Harsh cleansers and astringents can actually worsen acne. CeraVe and Cetaphil both make mild cleansers*
- Do not pop, squeeze, or pick at acne lesions, as this can promote inflammation and infection. Keep hands away from your face and other acne-prone parts of the skin.
- Limit sun exposure—Tanning only masks acne at best. At worst, sun exposure can lead to skin damage, especially if you are using an acne treatment that makes your skin more sensitive to sunlight and UV rays (this includes tanning booths).
- Choose cosmetics with care
 - Choose non-greasy skin products, and look for words like "non-comedogenic," "oil-free," and "water-based."
- Use sunscreen
 - Choose a sunscreen formula containing zinc oxide or titanium dioxide and wear it daily.
 - Sun protection helps prevent further scarring and pigment changes. We recommend the *EltanMD Sunscreens*.
- Be patient with your treatment
 - It should take your acne treatment to work (generally 6–8 weeks) and then stick with it.
 - Stopping treatment early may prevent you from seeing good results or even cause a relapse of symptoms. Your skin may look worse before it begins to improve and more than one type of treatment may be necessary.



bliss dermatology

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Topical Medications

Topical Retinoids "Retin A":

- Retinoids prevent skin cells from sticking to one another so that pores are not clogged. It helps to treat existing acne, but more importantly, helps to prevent future acne formation.
- Dryness, sun-sensitivity or mild irritation may occur. If irritation occurs, you may reduce treatment to every-other-night for two weeks. Avoid eyebrow waxing during use of retinoid.

Topical antibiotics:

- Reduce the number and activity of the bacteria that leads to acne.
- These topical abx include erythromycin, clindamycin, as well as sulfacetamide (sometimes with sulfur) and dapsone.
- Erythromycin and clindamycin are the most commonly used and evidence supports that these are best used when combined with retinoids and/or benzoyl peroxide. These should be applied in the morning after washing your face prior to applying sunscreen.

Topical Benzoyl Peroxide (BP):

- Benzoyl Peroxide will also help to kill the bacteria and open up clogged pores. It is often combined with topical antibiotics or retinoids.
- Dryness or mild irritation may occur. If irritation occurs, you may reduce treatment to every other night for two weeks.
- Benzoyl peroxide can bleach towels, clothing or pillowcases so care must be taken to let the product dry.
- Patients with inflammatory/pustular acne should use BP wash which can be purchased OTC. Panoxyl and Cerave both make great washes. BP wash is more effective if left on the skin for 5 minutes before rinsing.

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Topical Retinoid: Retin A, Differin, Tazorac (azelaic acid)

Instruction for Use: Apply a pea-sized amount to the entire face chest back at night.

Other Topical Medications: Aczone, Benzoyl Peroxide, Epiduo, Clindamycin(Cleocin)

Instruction for Use: Apply a thin layer amount to the entire face chest back in the morning at night

Oral Antibiotics:

- Antibiotics kill the bacteria that cause red pimples (inflammatory papules) and deep acne cysts.
- Main side effects are sun-sensitivity or upset stomach.
- Take medicine with a full glass of water and you should avoid lying down for one hour after ingestion.
- Antibiotics are absorbed best 1 hour before or 2 hours after meals. Sometimes we prescribe these antibiotics at a low dose to help control inflammation and to avoid antibiotic resistance.

Medication Prescribed: Doxycycline, Doryx, Minocycline, Solodyn, etc.

- Instruction for use: Take tablet/capsule once or twice daily. Follow your perscription instructions closely.

Spironolactone:

Spironolactone is used to treat many different disorders, from high blood pressure to fluid retention.

Although the U.S. Food and Drug Administration does not recognize spironolactone as an acne treatment, it is often prescribed off-label and proven effective in treating hormonally influenced breakouts in women.



We use spironolactone to treat “beard-distribution” acne that is a hallmark of hormonally mediated flaring.

- Instructions for use: 25mg/50mg/100mg tablet once or twice daily. Follow your prescriptions instructions closely.

Note: Lab work will need to be completed 1 week after starting Spironolactone or if the dose is increased.

Other Directions:

- Please discontinue all acne medications (topical and oral prescriptions) if you are pregnant or planning on becoming pregnant.
- Please inform us if you are breastfeeding so we can discuss safe treatment options for acne.

Diet and Acne:

Your diet CAN influence the severity of your acne. Studies show that low glycemic (low sugar) diets improve acne—so cutting out sugar (soda, bread, candy, etc.) can help your skin. Otherwise, dairy has also been shown to influence acne and can be avoided.