



ACNE

Acne is a hereditary disease that can be broken down into four main factors. Hormones are the first requirement as acne starts with puberty. Secondly, the skin cells get “sticky”. Thirdly, bacteria build up in these clogged pores. Finally, the fourth step is the body sends in inflammatory cells to fight these bacteria. Treatment can target one or more of these four factors: the hormones, the sticky skin cells, the bacteria or the inflammation.

Recommendations to consider for care and treatment:

PHYSICAL FACTORS – Do not squeeze or pick at your skin. Avoid leaning on your chin.

MOISTURIZERS – Avoid creams or lotions that contain oils. Many oils will block your pores, thus inducing acne activity.

HORMONAL FACTORS – The female hormone, estrogen, helps keep acne under control. Just prior to a menstrual period this hormone decreases in the body and female patients will have a tendency to experience an acne flare.

FACIAL CARE – Wash your face two times per day with a mild cleanser like Cetaphil liquid cleanser, CeraVe liquid cleanser, or Neutrogena.

HAIR CARE – Shampoo as often as necessary to keep your hair free of oil. You may use any good degreasing shampoo. Head and Shoulders is useful if you have dandruff as well as oily hair. Change your pillow case twice weekly.

DIET – Diet is a controversial subject in acne. Some people are not affected at all by foods while others break out with certain foods. Avoid those foods that you know cause a problem.

MAKE-UP – Many good quality, oil free, water based make-ups are acceptable.

TOPICAL THERAPY

Topical medicines include retinoids like adapalene, tretinoin or tazarotene (which all help open pores); benzoyl peroxide (which fights bacteria and inflammation) and topical antibiotics (which also fight bacteria and inflammation).

Morning topical medication should be followed by a lotion with sunscreen.

Caution that benzoyl peroxide products bleach fabric.

For tretinoin, adapalene, or tazarotene users: These topicals can irritate skin, but most skin can get used to it. Use 1-2 pea-sized bits to minimize the risk. Be aware skin can be more sensitive to sun on it. In general, skin can be more sensitive; so I don't recommend waxing while on this.

ANTIBIOTICS – Antibiotics such as doxycycline or minocycline are sometimes used initially to help calm the inflammation quicker and to help suppress pustular and deep abscess lesions. The antibiotics should be taken with some food and with water or juice but not with milk. Antacids, iron tablets and milk decrease the effectiveness of some antibiotics. To decrease the risk of reflux, do not lie down within 30 minutes of taking the antibiotic.

There may be minor side-effects from the use of antibiotics such as stomach upset, diarrhea, vaginal yeast infection, headache, increased sun sensitivity and occasional dizziness. Let us know if you have any problems. Do not take doxycycline or minocycline if any chance of pregnancy.

ORAL CONTRACEPTIVES -- Newer oral contraceptives have beneficial effects on acne. Should your acne not respond adequately to our usual acne regimen, let's discuss oral contraceptives. If you have high blood pressure, migraine headaches, history of blood clots, or you smoke, you should not use oral contraceptives. Another way to target hormones in female patients is an oral blood pressure medicine spironolactone as it blocks testosterone.

ISOTRETINOIN ("Accutane")

For acne that is resistant to standard treatments and/or scarring, this 5-6 month treatment is usually recommended.