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Tips and Treatments for Beating Acne

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Tips and Treatments for Beating Acne

Advice for Men – How to Shave When You Break Out

For the teenage young man who is new to shaving, coping with acne is a problem that just irritates people to no end. Trying to shave when breaking out with a big group of pimples can lead to many problems. However, it happens to everyone, so here are a few tips to make shaving easier to handle.

First, wash your face before you shave. Use hot, soapy water and wash it carefully. Then, apply shaving cream only on the areas that are pimple free and ready to shave. Be careful and do not nick the blemish, because that can be painful and it could bleed and force you to wear a bandage strip all day. Use a fresh, sharp disposable razor and carefully shave around the area. Some days you will have patches of light or even heavy beard surrounding the outbreak area, but don't worry about the looks. It is better to avoid drawing blood and creating a painful mess.

One concern when shaving, is to make sure you use a razor blade that is both sharp and clean. Most disposable razors can get about two to three shaving sessions before they become too dull. Once the razor is dull, throw it away and use a new one. Using a dull razor can damage the skin and make outbreaks worse.

For many teenage young men, the electric shaver is very helpful. Many find that by using an electric shaver they worry much less about pimples. In fact, unless the blemish is large and sore, you may be able to shave right over it with an electric razor without doing any harm. If you choose to go the electric shaver route, find a pre-shave lotion that will help the whiskers of your beard stand up so that they can be shaved off easier. Many of these pre-shave lotions contain alcohol and that can both dry out the skin and be painful if applied to acne. Find a brand that has no alcohol, and if possible one that contains an antibacterial agent that can even help you fight acne.

Teenagers that choose to use an electric shaver on a regular basis may find they have an easier time shaving while they have a breakout of acne. However, it is vital to use a pre-shave lotion that is alcohol free. This leads to fewer problems now than when a blade and soap is used. In fact, some teenagers may choose to only skip shaving during really bad outbreaks due to the soreness of the blemishes. This does not mean that teenagers must use an electric razor.

Many can successfully use a blade with little or no problems. These teens find that shaving around the patches of acne is more beneficial. For those teens that might prefer to skip shaving altogether because of acne, growing facial hair can be interesting to try and they may find they like the facial hair better.

Many teenagers also find that shaving every day is not necessary. If your beard is light then shaving every two or three days, or for some even once a week can be enough. If that is the case, then you can possibly wait until the outbreak has started to go away before shaving the area. Many problems go away with time, and fortunately acne is one of them.

Of course many youngsters find that the hassle of shaving during an outbreak is just no fun at all, and go the route of growing a beard. This can tend to make a person look a bit scruffy if the beard is not full and well trimmed, but many do prefer it to shaving during an outbreak. If you choose this method, be aware of proper grooming methods of facial hair.

Young men who suffer from the embarrassing problems of acne should rest assured though that the problem is temporary. Most people do outgrow acne by the time they leave puberty. Most people in their early twenties no longer suffer from the problems associated with acne, and it has faded to an unpleasant memory. Once a person ages past acne, shaving is no longer a bother, but the good skin care habits picked up during the teenage years can stay with a person for a lifetime.

Advice for Women – How to Apply Makeup When Pimples Are Prominent

Most teenage women face the unique challenge of applying makeup when pimples are prominent. There is a system to it that most women can follow that works quite well. The first step is to gently wash the face with cold water and soap. Then dab the face dry, carefully. After the face is dry, apply an astringent, which should be a part of every woman's beauty supplies. Almost any drugstore will carry something suitable to use as astringent.

If you have several blemishes, try using a concealer or stick cover-up. This goes right on the blemish and can be blended in to hide the acne. Next, carefully use your fingers to apply foundation to the blemished area. Then continue with the rest of the face, applying foundation with the fingers. After these steps are complete, continue with standard application of the makeup, and follow up with an application of face powder. The end result should be less noticeable pimples.

Of course this is using standard makeup and the downside is that some makeup can clog the pores. Consider changing brands to a makeup that does not clog pores and perhaps even to a makeup that is designed specifically for teenagers who have acne problems. Many times these makeup will come with complete instructions. This can make the job a lot easier. Also these makeup products often contain a topical ingredient that kills bacteria and helps to clean out pores. Look for non-allergic makeup that can help reduced the redness and reactions of skin irritations.

In addition, preparation for application of makeup can be easier with proper hygiene. Over washing the face can actually damage the skin, but carefully washing the face once or twice a day, especially with cold water and a mild soap or cleanser can do wonders. Also proper skin care using moisturizers and exfoliants can help keep the skin clear and healthy and help to keep the acne problem in check.

Many young women choose to forego the wearing of makeup when acne is causing problems, but many teenage young women find that the anxiety of teenage years is lessened when one can wear makeup. Covering up the unsightly blemishes can raise their self-esteem. There is really no right or wrong concerning wearing make up over acne. Every young woman facing

the problem of acne must make her own choice as to what is best for her in this instance. Just as young men must decide if shaving is something they want to engage in during acne outbreaks, young women must deal with acne and makeup.

Consulting a specialist in makeup can often be a good place to start when determining the type of makeup best to use during these years. Many department stores have makeup specialists who receive specialized training in this area. Most make up associates are particularly empathetic to the plight of the teenage girl, since they were once teenage girls themselves. Many of these department stores hold special workshops and seminars on makeup application, and those that cater to teenagers often take up the subject of acne blemishes and both how to cover them up properly and how to fight acne with proper skin care.

There are also direct sales organizations that specialize in providing high quality cosmetics to women, and many of these companies, with good reputations gained from years in the business, have specially designed products that fight acne and make the process of applying makeup during an outbreak easier than it used to be. Finding a good makeup artist who can help you with this process is a big help with the problem of acne and makeup application.

One tip that can help teenage girls that enjoy wearing makeup is to try several special products and visit local make up counters at the malls and department stores. This can help young girls find make up and other facial products that are helpful. When visiting department stores to find a specific brand of make up, try several lines and colors. Also, build trust with the sales associate so that you can get better tips about makeup. Make sure they understand that you suffer from acne and are looking for products to lessen the severity of outbreaks.

Actions to Avoid When Clearing Up Acne

There are many good and bad points to keep in mind when clearing up acne. Most of the good tips are usually a matter of common sense. Eat right, exercise, take vitamins and keep fit. Your immune system will fight off acne if you keep it strong. If you use medication, either prescription or over the counter, follow the directions you are given. Stay out of the sun. Use proper hygiene.

The list of "don'ts" might not be as obvious, but it is equally important. To start with, don't pop pimples. Many well meaning people will tell you to do so, but do not try this method. The result can make the problem worse. You could wind up driving the bacteria deeper into the skin or spreading the bacteria to other parts of the skin. This can create an infection that can be painful and just make the acne problem bigger.

Next, and perhaps most important, do not assume that everyone who gives you advice knows how properly handle acne outbreaks. Many people are well intentioned, but wrong. They will tell you to avoid fried foods, avoid chocolate, and get out in the sun. However, this advice is not accurate and can often lead to bigger issues.

Regarding chocolate and fried foods, remember that while good nutrition is important and recommended, as is regular exercise, there is no medical or scientific data that shows a

relationship of any kind between diet and acne. The old chocolate and fried foods myth is just that, a myth. Listen to what others say, but remember that you can still eat the foods you enjoy and take care of your skin.

If you are a man and are having a bad acne outbreak, be careful shaving. You may want to shave in patches on your face, use an electric razor, or simply wait and shave after the outbreak dissipates. If you are a woman, be careful during makeup application. Use makeup that does not clog pores, and if possible switch to makeup that includes antibacterial topical ointments as ingredients. If possible take a short class or seminar to learn the proper way to apply makeup during an acne outbreak.

Next, despite what some people have told you, the sun does not cure acne. If you go out in the sun remember that it can be hard on your skin. Wear sunglasses, wear a hat, and wear a sun blocking lotion or ointment. Go to the pharmacy and find a sunscreen that does not clog pores and you will be much better off and happier.

Do not wash your face to excess. Once or twice a day, gentle washing with cold water, and a mild soap or cleanser is all you need. Excessive washing of the face can damage the skin and lead to more acne problems.

If you are using a topical ointment, continue to do so. Make sure that it helps to unclog pores and kills bacteria, and choose an ointment that bacteria do not grow resistant to. Bacteria in the pores collect with dead skin and oil and grows, creating pimples that can be quite painful. Taking steps to keep pores unclogged and keeping bacteria in check will lead to fewer pimples, and hopefully they won't last as long. You can't give rid of pimples entirely, but you can reduce the numbers.

Don't think that you are alone in this. All teenagers have acne problems. All adults were once teenagers and went through the same thing you are going through now. People understand, so do not be embarrassed. Many teenagers make the mistake of letting acne ruin their self-esteem. They become embarrassed to go to school or to visit friends because of the large zit on the nose. Just remember that everyone has had a large zit on their nose at one time or another, and don't worry about it.

Also, it is important to remember that if the acne problem is becoming worse, don't hesitate to consult a professional. A dermatologist can help you if your acne is out of control. See a medical professional and get information on all of the treatments available. Hormone treatment, topical antibiotics, oral antibiotics and even alternative treatments like acupuncture, light therapy and topical applications like tea tree oil are available. Take advantage of the fact that professionals are available who understand your problem and if you need one, consult one.

Cosmetic Changes for Clearing Up Acne

From mild to severe, acne has a knack of presenting itself at the worse times. Fortunately, there are many cosmetic changes you can make to help clear up your acne. Of course, remember that what works for someone else may not always work for you. Our skin is highly

individualized, with its own specific set of sensitivities. Here are a few tips to help you deal with your acne.

First, start off by using over the counter medications to treat your acne. If your skin is sensitive or prone to drying, use a mild cleanser or soap. You may have to experiment with different cleansers in order to find one that does not irritate or exacerbate your acne. Wash your face once or twice daily. Avoid touching your face, or excessive scrubbing or rubbing. The best rule of thumb when it comes to acne is hands off. Although the junk food-acne connection has not been proved, if you sense that a certain food may be contributing to your acne, stop consuming the food and see what happens.

If you use make-up, read the labels and purchase products labeled non-acnegenic, non-comedogenic, and hypoallergenic. These products are formulated so as not to irritate even the most sensitive skin. Avoid sharing make-up with others, and always use clean washcloths, towels, and make-up sponges or other instruments to avoid transferring germs to your face.

If your efforts to clear up your skin using over the counter medications do not seem to work, make an appointment to visit a dermatologist. Your dermatologist will likely prescribe you with anti-acne oral or topical agents. Common treatments include antibiotic therapies, including the popular tetracyclines, and erythromycin antibiotics. Also common is the perennially popular Tretinoid, or Retin-A. Retin-A is a moderately strong topical agent that is derived from vitamin A. Most Retin-A comes in gel, cream, liquid and is applied once daily, usually at night, since Retin-A makes skin much more sun sensitive.

If you're interested in creating acne treatments and lotions from regular household goods, you're not alone. Many household recipes have been circulated for years. Again, everyone reacts differently to the same treatment, but the ease and overall safety of household recipes make it a good choice for those suffering from mild to moderate acne. Here are a few recipes that you can create at home using everyday household items to clear up your skin.

Making a baking soda scrub is easy to use, and many have reported successful results from its use. This scrub is designed to exfoliate your skin. Exfoliation is key in treating acne; since it focuses on removing dead skin cells that can get trapped in your pores and then manifest themselves as acne.

First, mix a small amount of baking soda (a teaspoon will probably be enough) with water to create a consistent paste. Very gently, massage the baking soda scrub onto your skin. Leave it on for approximately one minute, then rinse clean with lukewarm water. Use a clean towel to pat your face dry.

Another popular home treatment uses apple cider vinegar. Apple cider vinegar has long been lauded for its health benefits, including acne. Some claim that apple cider vinegar has the ability to rid your skin of bacteria, balance your skin's pH level, and keep your face fresh and free of excessive oil. Apple cider vinegar is also high in citric acid, which is a strong exfoliating ingredient that can help remove excess dead skin cells and improve your skin's overall texture and tone.

To use, simply dilute the apple cider vinegar, one part vinegar to eight parts water. If possible,

use high quality apple cider vinegar and purified water. To use, wet a cotton ball with your apple cider vinegar mix and gently moisten your skin. Don't overdo it. Apple cider vinegar is strong stuff that can dry out your skin, resulting in even more breakouts.

Egg whites, rich in protein and vitamins, have also been a favorite healing ingredient. Egg whites have long been used to help tone and tighten skin. Simply beat two egg whites together to a consistent froth. Apply the mixture to your face and let sit for about fifteen minutes. Rinse the egg off with lukewarm water.

Herbal Remedies and Other Non-Traditional Acne Treatments

In general, over-the-counter acne treatments and traditional prescription medications have proven effective in the reduction and virtual elimination of acne, there are other less traditional ways to approach the treatment of acne. When delving into non-traditional medicine most are dealing with approaches such as acupuncture, herbal medicines, homeopathic medicine, mind/body medicine, Ayurveda and Kampo as well as dietary and nutritional considerations. The following takes a look at each of these areas as they relate to acne.

Acupuncture: The use of acupuncture in the treatment of acne has not been scientifically evaluated but there have been reports that two acupuncture procedures have reduced the symptoms of acne: auricular acupuncture (acupuncture applied to the ear) and electro-acupuncture (acupuncture using a mild electrical current).

Herbal medicine: Some herbs are known to have anti-inflammatory properties and, for that reason, they may be helpful in the treatment of acne (as well as other skin conditions):

- Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*)
- German chamomile (*Matricaria recutita*)
- Witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*)
- Licorice root (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*)
- Flaxseed (*Linum usitatissimum*) and flaxseed oil
- Tea Tree Oil

The herbs that help reduce acne inflammation do so by reducing the amount of the P.acnes bacteria produced by the body as a reaction to clogged pores. Tea Tree oil has been favorably compared to benzoyl peroxide in the reduction of P.acnes and is said to have fewer side effects (stinging, itchiness and dry skin).

Homeopathic remedies: Homeopathic professionals evaluate the individual (their physical, emotional and intellectual makeup) before prescribing a treatment and then tailor the treatment to the individual. While homeopathy has not had the benefit of many scientific studies, professional homeopaths have found that certain homeopathic treatments reduce certain symptoms of acne:

Belladonna works best for people who are experiencing "hot" areas on their face or those who have pus-filled acne blemishes.

Calendula is used to treat pus-filled blemishes or blisters.

Hepar sulphur is useful for pus-filled blemishes that are painful.

Kali bromatum is used for deep acne blemishes, especially those on the forehead.

Silicea is used for deep, pus-filled acne blemishes.

Mind and body medicine: Mind and body approaches to the problem of acne are primarily through the practices of biofeedback, cognitive imagery and hypnotherapy.

Biofeedback and Cognitive Imagery: Biofeedback and cognitive imagery are relaxation therapies used because emotional stress can have an aggravating effect on acne. Biofeedback techniques train the individual to control some internal processes such as heart rate and muscle tension. Cognitive imagery (also called guided imagery) involves the use of mental pictures to relax and evoke helpful physical and emotional conditions. Together, when used properly by a person who has mastered the techniques, these methods have been shown to lessen the severity of acne breakouts.

Hypnosis: Hypnosis works pretty much the same way that biofeedback and cognitive imagery work, by relaxing the patient. The obvious difference is, of course, in the case of hypnosis, a professional practitioner is controlling the process.

Ayurveda: Ayurveda is a holistic system of medicine originated in India. Ayurveda focuses primarily on diet and lifestyle. Each person, as we all know, is unique and Ayurveda treatments recognize this by tailoring recommendations to the individual.

The practitioner of Ayurveda observes the individual and applies knowledge he or she has learned through ancient texts that document the 'energetic forces' (called Tridoshas) that influence everything in nature -- including, of course, humans. Ayurvedic remedies tend to be herbal; for example, the one Ayurvedic preparation that has proven best for acne relief, a preparation called "Sunder Vati" is an herbal remedy that consists of Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*), *Holarrhena antidysenterica* and *Embelia ribes*.

Kampo: Kampo is a Japanese version of traditional, ancient Chinese medicine. A Kampo treatment for acne, the treatment called: Keigai-rengyo-to (TJ-50), has proven effective in some cases. TJ-50 consists of seventeen herbs that have combined anti-inflammatory and anti-bacterial properties. Among these herbs are: Skullcap root (*Scutellaria lateriflora*), Licorice root (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), Mint (*Mentha arvensis*), Angelica root (*Angelica archangelica*), Peony root (*Paeonia lactiflora*).

Nutrition and Dietary Supplements: It has been pretty well proven that, at least as a general proposition, diet has no effect on acne but there are certain foods that affect certain people in certain ways. There are many reports from individual acne sufferers that certain drinks or foods (it seems that nuts are particularly suspect) make their acne worse. All that can be said about this is pay attention to what you eat and how it affects you over the next few days.

Alternative Therapies for Acne

Zits, pimples, blemishes, breakouts—whatever you call it, acne can be a challenging condition that can be difficult to treat. Acne is very common, with an estimated 80% of all people worldwide expected to suffer from some sort of acne in their lifetime. For those who suffer from the occasional zit, acne is a transient annoyance that is not of much concern most of the time. For others, acne is a daily obsession that can make a serious impact on a person's self-esteem and overall psychological health.

Most people who suffer from acne resort to harsh chemicals and conventional antibiotic therapies to heal their blemishes. Fortunately, more options are available now than ever before. If you are considering seeking out alternative therapies, here is a quick run-down of the latest methods for treating acne.

Blue light therapy: Blue light therapy is aimed at acne patients who have had little success with other treatments. Blue light therapy focuses on eradicating the bacteria that causes most forms of acne, propionibacterium acnes (*P. acnes*). *P. Acnes* creates the small molecules known as porphyrins that in turn help produce the bacterium that causes most types of acne inflammation. Blue light therapy works by zeroing in on the porphyrins. Porphyrins that are exposed to the blue light are able to produce free radicals that destroy the *P. acnes* bacteria.

Blue light therapy is rapidly becoming a popular treatment for acne because it is non-invasive and drug-free way to help heal blemishes. Many topical medications contain strong ingredients that damage sensitive skin, resulting in peeling, redness, and increased sun sensitivity. Blue light therapy is widely regarded as an easy and drug-free alternative to most acne medications. Some individuals have expressed concern over the safety of blue light therapy.

In the past, light therapy options have not been considered 100% safe. Past light therapy treatments consisted of ultraviolet light that was harmful to the skin. Fortunately, modern blue light therapy has been FDA approved and is free of UV light.

So how does blue light therapy work? Generally, blue light therapy is administered in gradual increments. A common schedule of treatment might consist of eight sessions given over a period of four weeks. Blue light therapy sessions are short, usually lasting about 15 minutes. Visit a skin specialist or dermatologist to receive more information, or to receive a treatment of blue light therapy.

Another form of light therapy that is used to treat acne is known as pulsed light and heat energy (LHE) therapy. LHE therapy uses both light and heat to eradicate the root causes of acne. Like blue light therapy, LHE therapy uses light to destroy acne-causing bacteria. LHE therapy also uses heat to reduce the production of sebum and to help shrink sebaceous glands.

LHE therapy is an attractive option for many acne sufferers because it promises fast results. Usually, improvement in the symptoms of acne can be seen in as early as 30 days. LHE therapy is also becoming popular because it is a fast treatment, with most sessions done in just over 10 minutes. The FDA has approved LHE therapy for the treatment of mild to moderate acne.

While different kinds of light therapies may seem attractive, they can also be expensive, and may not be covered by most health insurances. If you are looking for a therapy that is milder and less expensive, consider many the many herbal therapies that available. Many herbs have been signaled as potentially therapeutic.

Some acne sufferers swear by certain herbal supplements, including black currant seed oil and evening primrose oil. Both herbs are recommended to acne sufferers. Try taking three 500-milligram capsules each day to control your acne. It may be helpful to create an herbal diary of sorts, where you can track the herbs you are taking and their efficacy.

Beside herbs, certain vitamins and minerals are also highly recommended for acne sufferers. Vitamin A is perhaps the most important vitamin for the production and maintenance of a healthy complexion. Vitamin A helps control the amount of sebum produced by your skin, and it is also a key vitamin in the production of keratin.

Vitamin A is very potent, and must only be taking in controlled doses. Consult your doctor about the appropriate amount of Vitamin A for your situation. Other important 'skin' vitamins are Vitamin B-6 and Vitamin E. An important mineral for the maintenance of a healthy complexion is Zinc. Approximately 30-50 mg of Zinc daily is recommended for acne sufferers.

Home Treatments that Help Fight Pimple Prone Skin

The most effective home treatment regimens for acne start with washing your face.

You may think you know how to wash your face -- you've been doing it all your life, right? Well you may have been causing some acne problems. Washing the face twice a day, either with a formulated soap that is designed to fight acne, or with an antibacterial lotion that contains benzoyl peroxide, or salicylic acid, can help prevent acne. Washing your face several times a day however, can wash away essential skin oils. This can cause your sebaceous glands to create more skin oil -- and perhaps over-produce skin oil and cause acne problems.

Washing your face or entire body carefully up to two to four times each day with a very gentle soap and without a lot of friction will leave you with a clean face and body and should minimize acne problems. However, scrubbing or scraping the skin with a rough wash cloth, may help you feel clean and refreshed, but that method is very hard on your skin and will, almost certainly, create acne problems by scrubbing away natural skin oils and actually damaging your hair follicles. If you properly care for your skin with washing and moisturizing, your skin will stay healthy for you.

Diet and nutrition: Another home treatment area concerns your diet. Even though science has not found a direct link between diet and acne it is very important to maintain healthy eating habits and to remember that we are all unique or, more precisely, our metabolism's are all unique. Greasy hamburgers, for example, may not appear to have a harmful effect on some people, yet they may cause major problems, in the areas of weight management and complexion, for other people.

There are many reports from individual acne sufferers that certain drinks or foods, such as dairy products, eggs and nuts can exacerbate the problem. These foods can make a person's acne worse. If you suspect that something you are eating is causing your acne, pay close attention to what you eat when your break out. Try eliminating those foods.

The water treatment: An important yet simple home treatment for acne is drinking water. Water is the main carrier of nutrients throughout your body and is quite possibly the single most important contributor to healing and preventing acne flare-ups.

Wastes and toxins from what you eat and what you breathe will build up in your system and cause health problems as well as skin problems such as acne. The human body has four outlets for this buildup of toxins and wastes: the bowels, the kidneys, the lungs, and the skin. Your bowels and kidneys are your body's primary outlets for this toxic buildup. If these two primary outlets are not working properly your lungs and skin become involved in the process, causing breathing problems and skin problems.

To keep your bowels and kidneys working at maximum efficiency, drink 6 to 8 glasses of water a day; this will help flush toxins out of your system and keep your complexion healthier.

Vitamins for skin health: Your skin, just like every other organ in your body, requires proper nutrition to function properly. Since very few of us eat a well-balanced diet, the use of vitamins to supplement our diet are very important.

Some vitamins and minerals are powerful antioxidants that effectively flush toxins out of your body; others have antibacterial effects. These types of vitamins are vital for keeping your pores open and healing any damaged skin tissue.

NOTE: It is important to note that taking too much of a vitamin or mineral can be toxic and extremely dangerous. Each supplement listed has a recommended dosage that you should not exceed.

The most beneficial vitamins for your skin health are:

Vitamin A: Vitamin A reduces sebum production and also works as an antioxidant that helps rid your body of toxins.

Vitamin B Complex: B vitamins help to keep your skin looking healthy and also have a positive effect on the anxiety and stress that not only accompanies an outbreak of acne but may cause further outbreaks.

The vitamins in the B vitamin family are: Thiamine, Riboflavin, Niacin, Pantothenic Acid, Pyridoxine and Cyanocobalamin. Each one of these B vitamins has a role to play in keeping your skin and body healthy.

Vitamin C with bioflavonoids: Vitamin C has been called the most important vitamin supplement you can take. Vitamin C works as an antioxidant and the bioflavonoids work as antibacterial agents.

Chromium picolinate or chromium polynicotinate: Chromium is used to reduce skin infections. A chromium supplement is especially required for people who consume large quantities of sugar and sugary foods.

Zinc: Zinc helps your skin tissue heal, helps prevent scarring caused by deep blemishes and also has anti-oxidant properties.

Vitamin E: Vitamin E is another antioxidant that will aid healing skin tissue.

Multivitamins: Taking a good multivitamin with chromium every day will give you most, if not all, of the vitamins you need to supplement your diet.

OTC Treatments for Your Pimple Problem

Everybody, at some stage in their life, will have to deal with some form of acne. On some of the lucky ones, acne will be very mild and infrequent on some others it will be so severe it will seem like the closest thing to "hell on earth." The vast majority of people will, however, be in the middle somewhere.

Acne may be aggravated by factors such as stress, diet, air quality and life-style choices but it is caused by two things only: hormonal imbalances and genetics. Everyone, at some time in their lives will go through a period of time when their hormones seem to get messed up (puberty and pregnancy are prime examples) and if acne is your genetic trait -- you're stuck with it.

Fortunately, there are many over the counter (OTC) medications available to help people deal with acne. How well they work for you will pretty much be determined by three factors: the product's active ingredients, the cause of the user's acne and the user's skin type.

Active ingredients: Not all acne products will work the same way because of the different ingredients used. The active ingredient benzoyl peroxide, for example, works by reducing the P.acnes bacteria (a naturally occurring bacteria in the skin) while the active ingredient salicylic acid works by reducing the amount of dead skin the body sloughs off.

Following are descriptions of the active ingredients you will find used in most over-the-counter acne medications:

Alcohol and acetone: Alcohol and acetone are used together in some over-the-counter acne medications. The acetone makes the skin less oily and the alcohol kills external bacteria.

Benzoyl peroxide: Benzoyl peroxide is the "wonder drug" in the acne treatment industry; it works by reducing the natural P.acnes bacteria and reduces the quantity of dead skin cells. By performing these two actions, benzoyl peroxide manages to lessen the effects of two of the main causes of comedones (the large, deep, pus-filled pimples that are the trademarks of acne). Benzoyl peroxide has been used for years in acne treatment medications since being discovered to be very effective in treating mild acne.

You will find (on the Internet) many "personal" recommendations for benzoyl peroxide and details about how it was used to successfully treat acne but, as with all medications, use an acne product with benzoyl peroxide as instructed on the product label or as instructed by a physician. Benzoyl peroxide, when over-used, has the side-effect of drying out your skin and can also discolor any fabrics or materials it comes into contact with, e.g., shirts, towels, sheets, etc. Benzoyl peroxide is available as a lotion or gel and can be used as a preventative acne treatment even after your acne has cleared up.

"Herbal," "organic" and "natural" products: You will find some OTC products with labels such "herbal," "organic" and "natural;" these products are generally put on the market to appeal to the people who are attracted to products with those labels. The products themselves may or may not be beneficial for acne and should be considered untested.

Resorcinol: The active ingredient resorcinol has been found to work well on small acne blemishes and can be found in some OTC products combined with sulfur.

Sulfur itself has been used in a number of OTC medications for decades, usually in combination with active ingredients such as alcohol, salicylic acid and resorcinol. Sulfur has been found to be an effective acne treatment for some people but it does not seem to be known exactly how it works to clear up acne. Products with sulfur will tend to have an unpleasant smell.

Salicylic acid: The active ingredient salicylic acid is generally effective for acne blemishes when there is no inflammation present. Salicylic acid acts by unclogging clogged-up pores to reduce the number of acne blemishes formed -- it does this by minimizing the amount of dead skin cells; it has no known effect on the production of sebum or the production of the P.acnes bacteria. Just as is recommended with products containing benzoyl peroxide, products with salicylic acid as the active ingredient should be used even after the acne clears up to prevent its return. One possible side-effect of salicylic acid is skin irritation in some people.

Considering your skin: Everyone's skin is a bit different. Some people have generally dry skin, some have generally oily skin and most people have a combination of the two on different areas on our bodies. In general, acne in areas of oily skin will respond better to a gel based acne product while areas of acne on dry skin will respond better to a cream.

If you have sensitive skin don't use a real strong acne medication – it will just lead to irritation and possibly make your acne worse.

Some of the milder acne treatments can be used as a preventative measure and some (like those with benzoyl peroxide and salicylic acid) are recommended as post-acne preventative measures but many are too strong and will irritate your skin.

If you have anything but a mild, seemingly manageable case of acne, an OTC medicine may control it and eventually get rid of it. If, however, your acne seems out of control or painful or too stressful to handle by yourself -- don't play doctor -- get to a doctor!

The Incredible Shrinking Pimple—Quick Fixes to Get on with Your Day

How do you take care of that pimple that has popped up overnight? Are there quick fixes that will allow you to get on with your day? Sorry to tell you, but there aren't any magic creams that will make it disappear.

First, you must know that almost everyone gets zits or pimples whatever term you want to use. Have you walked down your school hall and actually looked at someone's face to see if they have pimples? Probably you don't. As an adult, I don't look at strangers' faces to see if they have a red spot, pimple, or blackhead and think negative thoughts of them. Keep your hands off your face, don't be tempted to pick, squeeze or scrape, leave it alone. It really won't ruin your day unless you let it.

If you feel you must do something, then go to your local drugstore and look for a cream that will temporarily cover up a pimple and aid in the healing. I grew up with Clearasil; it was necessary have for me and all my friends. It not only helped to make the pimple less noticeable, it also helped in the healing process.

Before you go and buy an acne product, there are certain things that you need to take into consideration. Know your skin type. If you have oily skin, choose a gel-based product. If you have dry skin, you should choose a cream. If you have combination skin like most people, then buy the product that will treat your acne in whatever zone your pimples are. If they are in the oily area, use gel based, if they are appearing in the dry area, then use a cream.

Your skin can be sensitive so choose a product that is not harsh as this could make your acne problem worse. It can over dry your skin or cause it to produce even more oil and therefore cause even more pimples. Read the labels carefully and if your skin is sensitive choose the mildest cream or ointment you can find.

You can use some creams as preventive measures but most are too harsh to use unless there are pimples present on your skin. Medicated products contain a chemical that dries up the pimple and acts to exfoliate. The two most commonly used are salycic acid or benzoyl peroxide. Some pimples or extreme outbreaks of acne may not respond to over the counter medications. Extreme cases can and should be treated by a professional such as a doctor or a dermatologist.

To get you through the day, try putting a light dusting of face powder in the area where the pimple is. Don't make it worse by adding heavy make-up. Don't be tempted to squeeze it because that will only make it redder and more irritated. That can also spread the infection to other parts of your face and increase the problem.

There are several common brands of acne over the counter medication. These brand names are just being used as examples and not meant as recommendations for your skin. Products that have benzoyl peroxide come in cream gels, lotions, or soap. Those products are Clearasil, Dryox, Persa-Gel, and Fostex.

Products that have salicylic acid are, Stridex, Oxy Night Watch, Clearasil Clearstick Maximum Strength, and PROPAPH.

Sulfur is another medication used in some over the counter acne treatments. Some products that include sulfur are, Liquimat, Therac Lotion, Sulmasque, and Sulpho-Lac Acne Medication.

Those medications that have a combination of benzoyl peroxide and sulfur include, Dryox 10S, Dryox 20S and Sulfoxyl.

Maybe there aren't any quick fixes if you wake up the morning of your first date, prom or your wedding day to find a pimple. The most important thing to remember is to keep your hands off your face! Chances are, your pimples look bigger and worse to you than to anyone that is looking at you. Square your shoulders, lift your chin, and determine that you won't let an acne outbreak ruin your life. Go on with your day, remember the basics of taking care of acne and be extra vigilant about keeping your hands away from your face.

Top Ten Treatments to Abolish Acne From Your Life

Most people want to get rid of acne forever, and never be bothered with zits and blackheads again. The problem can be embarrassing and hard to control, especially among teenagers, who almost always suffer from some sort of acne. Acne is a part of adolescence and cannot be gotten rid of entirely, but it can be controlled and the effects lessened. Here are a few ways to do so.

First, while the old myth that fried foods and chocolate has been disproved, eating right and having good nutrition helps the body and strengthens the immune system, so proper diet is still recommended. Eating whole grains, vegetables, lean meats, fruits and only limited dairy products can help. Also make sure that you are getting enough vitamins and minerals in your diet.

It might be necessary to take a good quality vitamin supplement. Along with a healthy diet, getting plenty of exercise will go a long way to good health in general and a healthy immune system. Moderate amounts of exercise three times a week will improve health. Avoiding smoking, alcohol and dangerous drugs is a given.

Next, it is important to practice proper hygiene. There is an old myth that says acne comes from bad hygiene, and that is not true, but acne will certainly take advantage of chances to grow. One of the causes of acne is a bacterium on and under the skin. Moderate washing will help. Also exfoliating with a mild over the counter exfoliate helps many people.

Next, take a look at the topical antibiotics and antibacterial agents available in many of the over the counter medications and washes sold to help acne. The good ones may contain Benzoyl peroxide, the most common acne treatment available without a doctor's prescription. It kills the bacteria and the pimples do not develop a resistance to the medication. For this reason Benzoyl peroxide will not lose its effectiveness in fighting and killing bacteria.

If using it, begin with a low concentration and work up. Be sure when you buy it that it is non-comedogenic, which means that the medication will not clog the pores. If you are into natural

remedies, tea tree oil is a popular natural remedy that works the same way Benzoyl peroxide works, but is less irritating to the skin.

Another over the counter remedy that works and is popular is salicylic acid. Salicylic acid unplugs the pores and helps to get rid of dead skin cells, which attract bacteria and make acne worse. There are many good over the counter remedies available that contain salicylic acid and it is good to use it in conjunction with Benzoyl peroxide. The two remedies make a good two-fisted team.

Sulfur works in many ways like Benzoyl peroxide. It is not as widely used, however, it is believed to be not quite as effective. However, if for some reason you cannot use tea tree oil or Benzoyl peroxide, the by all means give sulfur a try.

Glycolic acid is another ingredient that works. It gets rid of dead skin and it stimulates the production of new cells, which many believe will help unclog pores.

Light therapy and acupuncture are two natural remedies that have their fans. Acupuncture also usually involves changing diet and lifestyle and according to the practitioners who use it can cure the root causes of acne. Light therapy is expensive, but for many very helpful. It involves treatments of light in wavelength that many believe kills bacteria, and if it doesn't work, at least does no harm because light at the wavelength used is not harmful to skin.

If the above remedies are not making a visible difference, visiting a doctor can result in prescriptions for antibiotics that are known to be effective. Erythromycin, Benzacilin, Duac, benzamycin, Sodium Sulfacetamide, and azelaic acid cream all work for many people. Tetracycline and the related cycline drugs also kill the bacteria when taken orally and help many.

Still the best cure for acne is simply age. Most people outgrow acne when they get through puberty and get into their early twenties. For some it sticks around a little longer, but with adulthood it usually goes away. But the good nutrition and hygiene habits you gain in fighting acne will stay with you and benefit you for a lifetime.

What's All The Gunk Inside a Pimple?

Before discussing the gunk that is found inside a pimple, first you need to define what a pimple is. Pimples, or zits the slang name can be mild to severe. It's a common skin condition and can affect anyone from teenagers to women in their 40's and 50's. It's rare to find acne in men of that age range. Acne, the full medical term is acne vulgaris is a common skin condition that happens when skin cells are clogged with oil and dead skin and then is infected with bacteria. A pimple is red and is often raised bumps on the skin affecting the face, neck, shoulders, and back area.

If a pimple bursts under the skin and sends bacteria into the surrounding tissues, it is then called a papule. If the papule goes even deeper under the skin, it's called a pustule. It might not be as red as other pimples but may have a white center and be very painful. If it goes even

deeper in the skin, it is then called a cyst. These are very serious and should be treated by a trained professional who will recommend topical ointments or a prescription drug to help in clearing it up.

Propionibacterium acnes are normally found on the skin. It increases during puberty as it uses sebum as a growth nutrient. Some people just have more of this bacterium on their skin. When that happens, and it collects in pores and hair follicles and draws white blood cells to that follicle. These white blood cells produce an enzyme that fights the bacteria they see as a foreign body and tries to destroy it.

A normal follicle has sebum that is produced by a sebaceous gland. This fills the hair follicle and spreads over the skin surface that gives the skin an oily appearance. If all is working correctly, this gives your face a healthy and moisturized look. Problems occur when the sebum is trapped in the hair follicle and cells that normally slough off plug up their hair follicles. This is what is commonly called blackheads and whiteheads, the medical term being comedones. It's a whitehead if the oil has broken through to the surface. It's called a blackhead if the oxygen in the air oxidizes the oil and it changes from white to black.

If the pimple inflammation is right near the surface, it's called a pustule, a papule if it's deeper in the skin, and a cyst if it is deeply burrowed into the skin. A mild case of can consists of dome-shaped lesions that contain pus over a blocked follicle. Normally, these follicles have a hair in the center. This type of acne is usually healed and doesn't progress to the next stage and heals without leaving scars. If the infection goes deeper, it becomes a pustule and then a cyst. These more serious forms of acne will cause deep scarring if not treated properly.

It doesn't help to "pick" at these pimples in whatever form you have them. By picking or squeezing, you can add additional bacteria into the area and make the outbreak worse instead of better. Your hands or fingers may have bacteria that you don't even know about that can aggravate the condition of your acne. A good rule to remember is to keep your face clean and your hands off your face. If you have abnormally oily hair, it's extremely important to keep your hair away from your face. Keep your pillowslip clean, change it every other day, and keep your hair pulled back when you are sleeping.

So, what is all that ugly junk that comes pouring out of a large pustule when you are squeezing? If you are tempted to squeeze hoping to get rid of a pimple or blackhead sooner, what comes out is a whitish-yellow fluid. This fluid is a collection of white blood cells, old tissue that has liquefied and other cellular debris. Pus is often found at a site of infection, or at the site where a foreign body has entered the body. It's perfectly natural for it to be found in a pimple. Your body is attempting to fight off a bacterium that is stuck in the follicle.

Yuck- Pimple Popping Rules

Do you ever wonder if popping a pimple will cause you any pain long term? What about if there is a procedure out there that maybe you should follow? There are rules and you should follow or you could end up with pain in the affected area followed possibly by an eternal acne scar. Everywhere you look you will find conflicting information about popping pimples. Some believe

that pimple popping is acceptable, while others say never touch a pimple.

Unfortunately, everyone has had a huge pimple just begging to be popped and if you must, then at least try to do it correctly. If not done correctly it can leave you with more than a pimple, in fact it can make the condition a whole lot worse.

Popping pimples should not be done with your bare fingertips. This is because dirt from your fingers and actually force bacteria into the pores and cause an infection to occur. This will result in a larger bump and a possible scar. If the pimple is deep under the surface of your skin and it is filled with a white puss you may end up squeezing the acne bacteria back down into your pores, which can result in a large irritated acne cyst. Acne cysts will linger for a lot longer than a pimple and will more than likely cause you to scar.

To remove a pimple that you feel you just have to pop, such as the zit with the white puss just under the skin surface, at least do it safely and in a hypoallergenic way. The first step is to clean the area thoroughly with an antibacterial face wash or even hand soap. Next, take two sterile gauze pads and use them to gently press on each side of the pimple. Remember, do not use your bare fingertips and absolutely do not use your fingernails to apply pressure. If the white puss is easily squeezed out then go ahead and do so, but if it does not come out easily, then you should stop.

After you have removed the white puss then use a clean gauze pad to apply some hydrogen peroxide and some antibiotic cream, such as Neosporin or any other triple antibiotic cream, to the affected area. If the white puss did not come out when pressure was first applied then you can try soaking a piece of gauze in a quarter teaspoon of salt and half cup of warm tap water. Hold the gauze on the pimple for ten minutes and repeat this several times a day. The salt water helps to dry out the pimple and draw it closer to the skin surface. Never attempt to squeeze a pimple that is not showing white puss under the skin surface.

Many scientists and dermatologists have tried to find a way to get rid of a pimple quickly with little success. Acne sufferers will continue to suffer with a pimple for longer than a day as there is very little that will successfully rid them of their pimples overnight. Pimple popping may seem like the easiest a quickest way to get rid of the pesky pimple, but it is a practice that should be reserved for certain types of zits. Only pimples that show the white puss just under the surface and when pressure is applied the puss releases easily should be popped.

Red pimples that linger just below the skin are very painful and can make a person want to pop or poke at them. These types of pimples should be left alone and trying to pop them will not work. In fact, this can prolong the life of the pimple. Prolonging the life of a pimple is the last thing any pimple sufferer wants.

There are many myths as to what helps clear up pimples. Tanning is one thing that people think helps clear up acne, however this is untrue. People believe this because they think that tanning dries up the oils that cause pimples. Even though a tan may temporarily cover the redness of acne, there's no evidence that having tanned skin helps to clear up acne. People who tan in the sun or in tanning booths or beds run the risk of developing dry, irritated, or even burned skin. They're also at increased risk of premature aging and developing skin cancer. Tanning should not be used as an acne treatment.

Preventing acne by washing your face daily, morning and night, with warm water and antibacterial soap will suffice. Do not scrub your skin as this may actually cause acne flare-ups. If acne is a problem for you, consult your physician or dermatologist about possible medication treatment. Just remember that popping a pimple can cause it to be worse and may actually result in long-term effects like scarring.

Banishing Acne Scars for Good- What Are Your Options?

Acne scars are a problem for many people who suffered bad acne flare-ups in the past. After all, 80% of people in their teens and twenties are affected with acne. Most people will not have any lasting any affects of acne, but some will develop scarring that can be disfiguring. There are many products and medical procedures available for the treatment of acne scars. These treatments range from topical skin creams to surgical procedures. Prevention is also very important if wanting to avoid a long-term problem.

Prevention of acne scars is the best way to avoid future problems. To prevent acne lesions that cause scarring, you must learn how to reduce the factors that cause acne breakouts in the first place. Some ways to prevent acne lesions is daily washing of your face with an antibacterial soap and avoiding the use of heavy lotions on the face and acne prone areas of your body.

There are several classifications of acne scars. These should be known in order to determine what type of treatments would be most effective. Ice pick acne scars are sharp, narrow scars that make the skin appear as if it has been punctured. Ice pick scars are usually too deep to be treated with any acne scar resurfacing. Boxcar scars are round or oval depressions and if they are not too deep can usually be treated with some treatments. Rolling scars are spots below the skin and can't be treated with conventional acne scar treatments. Breaking up the fibrous tissue beneath the skin treats rolling scars.

There are many different acne scar treatments and most times procedures are combined to offer the greatest results. Dermal fillers are a product that is injected into the acne scars to give a smoother look. Examples of dermal fillers are fat, bovine collagen and human collagen. Dermal fillers are not a permanent solution to acne scars and the procedure must be repeated for maintenance. Punch excision is used to treat deep scars such as ice pick and boxcar scars. Punch excision is the process of using a tool to remove the entire scarred area and suture the remaining skin together. This method will leave a scar but it is typically a lot less noticeable than if the acne scar had been left.

Punch excision is sometimes used with skin grafting as well. This means that rather than suturing the skin together a skin graft is applied using skin usually removed from behind the ear. With skin grafting color and skin texture differences may be noticeable but can be corrected after healing with skin resurfacing. Punch elevation is surgical procedure used on deep boxcar acne scars. The procedure involves using a punch tool to remove the scar and then elevating the under layer skin and securing it with sutures. This method lessens the risk of color and texture differences and also reduces visible scars left from suturing as in punch excision. Subcutaneous incision is the method used to break up the fibrous bands caused under the skin

by rolling scars. Laser resurfacing is a popular choice of repair for many skin conditions. Laser resurfacing works by burning off the top layers of skin and in turn newer looking skin grows in its place.

To continue, there are many ways to correct or at least lessen the appearance of acne scars. Prevention of acne scars is key and will help you avoid the need to acne scar treatment altogether. If you feel acne scar treatment is something you require, consult your physician. Your physician will refer you to a qualified dermatologist with whom you can discuss your treatment options. Choosing the best treatment is key, as you want to use the most economical and effective method possible. You will also want to discuss treatment options that can be combined, for example, punch elevation and laser resurfacing.

Combining the two treatments will compliment each other as the laser resurfacing can reduce any minimal scarring caused by the surgical procedure. When considering acne scar treatment always seek the help of a professional that has the correct credentials needed for such consultations. Also note that there are many over the counter products that state they can reduce the appearance of acne scars. While many of them may reduce the appearance temporarily, your healthcare professional is the best judge when it comes to a permanent solution.

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