



ACNE

Acne is a condition that has plugged pores (blackheads and whiteheads), inflamed pimples (pustules), and deeper lumps (nodules). Acne occurs on the face, as well as the neck, chest, back, shoulders, and upper arms. Although most teenagers get some form of acne, adults in their 20's, 30's, 40's, or even older, can develop acne. Acne can be disfiguring and upsetting to the patient. Untreated acne can leave permanent scars; these may be treated by your dermatologist in the future. To avoid acne scarring, treating acne is important.

Acne is not caused by dirt. Testosterone, a hormone which is present in both males and females, increases during adolescence (puberty). It stimulates the sebaceous glands of the skin to enlarge, produce oil, and plug the pores. Whiteheads (closed comedones), blackheads (open comedones), and pimples (pustules) are present in teenage acne. Early acne occurs before the first period in females and is called prepubertal acne. When acne is severe and forms deep "pus-filled" lumps, it is called cystic acne. This may be more common in males. Adult acne develops later in life and may be related to hormones, childbirth, menopause, or stopping the pill. Adult women may be treated at the period and at ovulation when acne is especially severe, or throughout the entire cycle. Adult acne is not rosacea, a disease in which blackheads and whiteheads do not occur.

It is best to wash your face with a mild cleanser and warm water daily. Washing too often or too vigorously may actually make your acne worse. Acne is not caused by foods. However, if certain foods seem to make your acne worse, try to avoid them. Wear as little cosmetics as possible. Oil-free, water-based moisturizers and make-up should be used. Choose products that are "non-comedogenic" (should not cause whiteheads or blackheads) or "non-acnegenic" (should not cause acne). Remove your cosmetics every night with mild soap or gentle cleanser and water.

Control of acne is an ongoing process. All acne treatments work by preventing new acne breakouts. Existing blemishes must heal on their own, and therefore, improvement takes time. The treatment your dermatologist recommends will vary according to the type of acne.

Information obtained from American Academy of Dermatology.

Disclaimer: All information contained in this site is general in nature. For a specified diagnosis or treatment, please call our office, 724-837-5810.