

Acne Self-Care Handout

Patience. Give the acne products enough time to do their job.

Picking. Picking or "popping" your acne lesions can make the acne worse. The lesions can become more inflamed or infected and increase the risk of scarring.

Cleansing. Acne is not caused by dirt. Washing too frequently or too vigorously can make your acne worse. In most circumstances, you should simply wash your face gently with mild soap and warm water twice a day. Remove any cosmetics every night before going to bed.

Shaving. Soften your beard thoroughly with soap and warm water before applying shaving cream. Shave lightly to avoid nicking acne lesions. Always use a sharp blade.

Diet. There is no scientific evidence that foods are responsible for causing or worsening acne. If you think that certain foods make your acne worse, you may want to avoid them, but it is more important to maintain a well-balanced diet.

Cosmetics. Look for skin care products that are oil-free and described as "non-comedogenic" or "non-acnegenic." Avoid heavy foundation makeup. Remove your cosmetics every night with soap and water. Applying a green undercover cosmetic over red lesions may help to hide acne lesions.

Sunlight. Sunlight can temporarily "hide" the acne, but it can lead to hyper pigmented spots on your skin that can take even longer to fade. Since sunlight ages the skin and can cause skin cancer, it is best to use a sunscreen when exposed to sunlight. Select a sunscreen that is oil-free and protects from both UVA and UVB radiation.

Certain acne medications can make you more sensitive to sunlight. It is important to avoid direct sunlight by wearing protective clothing and using sunscreen on areas that cannot be covered. Tanning booths should also be avoided because the ultraviolet light can react with the medication, causing burning or a rash.

Medications

- It is important to take your medication exactly as prescribed by your dermatologist. Using more medication or adding doses will not make the acne go away any faster and it may result in skin irritation or other side effects. Taking too little medication or skipping doses may allow the acne to continue.
- Medications applied to the skin are meant to be used on the whole area affected by acne. For instance, if you have acne on your face, you must apply the medication to your whole face. Placing the medication only on the acne lesions that you see today will allow new acne lesions to appear on skin that now appears normal.
- To avoid forgetting a dose, take your medication the same time every day. Take it while performing other routine tasks, such as brushing your teeth.
- Talk to your dermatologist before stopping your medications.
- Give the medications enough time to do their job. This may take 6 to 8 weeks.