

GOLDMAN DERMATOLOGY, PLLC

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ACNE

What is acne?

Acne is the most common skin condition treated by a dermatologist. It is characterized by whiteheads and blackheads (comedones) and pimples/zits (pustules and inflamed papules/nodules). There are many types of acne, with acne vulgaris being most common. Acne is typically seen on the face, chest, and back. Acne is not limited to adolescents, it can occur at any age. Many adults in their 20's, 30's, and even 40's present with acne.

What causes acne?

Acne is a disorder of oil (sebaceous) glands in the skin. Under hormonal influences, they begin to enlarge and produce more oil (sebum), plugging the pores and promoting growth of bacterium called *P. acnes*. Contrary to the popular belief, acne is not caused by dirt or diet, although if certain foods clearly make your acne worse, try to avoid them.

Treatment

Untreated acne can be disfiguring, leaving permanent scars. Your dermatologist will tailor the treatment plan based on your acne type, however its success will largely depend on your patience and persistence. All acne medications take at least 4-6 weeks to produce noticeable improvement because they work by preventing new breakouts. Whatever blemishes you have at the beginning of therapy will not be helped dramatically and will take time to heal on their own. Please resist the urge to squeeze the pimples yourself, it will only cause more redness, swelling, and even scarring.

Daily Skin Care – Acne Regimen

- 4) Cleansing:** wash your face gently with a mild oil-free cleanser and warm water.
 - Neutrogena Fresh Foaming Cleanser
 - Neutrogena One Step Gentle Cleanser
 - Purpose Gentle Cleansing Wash
 - Olay Foaming Face Wash, Sensitive Skin
 - For extremely oily skin, we recommend Goldman glycolic/salicylic acid cleanser and toner pads. (Ask a nurse for more information)
- 2) Using topical medications:** apply a thin layer of medication on thoroughly dried skin. Avoid getting the medicine near the eyes. If you were prescribed a retinoid (Differin, Retin-A, or Tazorac), see the back page for specific instructions.
- 3) Moisturizers/sunscreens:** any that is 100% oil-free. Recommend using a moisturizer with an SPF as some acne medications may make your skin more sensitive to sunburn.

4) **Make-up:** any that is 100% oil-free and noncomedogenic.

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USING TOPICAL RETINOIDS:
YOUR GUIDE FOR SUCCESS

What are retinoids?

Retinoids are synthetic vitamin A derivatives. They play a very important role in treatment of acne by working on both plugged pores and inflamed pimples. Most commonly used brands include **Differin**, **Retin-A**, and **Tazorac**. Please inform your doctor if you are pregnant, nursing, or planning on getting pregnant as retinoids are contraindicated in those instances.

What are the most common side effects?

Mild skin irritation, dryness, and peeling are seen mostly at the beginning of therapy.

Please follow these steps to avoid excessive irritation:

- 1) Wash your face with a gentle cleanser, pat dry and wait 20-30 minutes before applying the medication.
- 2) Squeeze a pea-sized amount onto your fingertips and dab on your forehead, chin, and both cheeks.
- 3) Spread the medication out in each area to form a thin layer over the entire face. Avoid getting the medication near eyes or lips since the skin is very sensitive in these areas.
- 4) Start using the medication only every other night for the first 2 weeks, unless instructed otherwise. If at the end of the second week you are not experiencing excessive dryness or irritation, you may start using the medication every night. You can use an oil-free moisturizer to alleviate the dryness.
- 5) Retinoids may make your skin more sensitive to sunburn. Apply sunscreen with at least SPF 15 every morning regardless of the weather. To simplify your regimen, just use a moisturizer that has an SPF in it.