

## **Tips for Getting the Most Out of Your Acne Treatment**

Good skin care plays an important role in treating acne. Following these skin care guidelines—unless your dermatologist instructs otherwise—can help improve treatment results:

### **1. Do NOT pop, squeeze or pick at acne.**

This can make acne worse by spreading inflammation. With medical treatment, removing lesions is rarely necessary; however, when comedo removal is needed, it should be performed by an experienced healthcare professional.

### **2. Gently wash your face twice a day with an acne cleanser and pat dry.**

Acne is not caused by poor hygiene, and vigorous washing and scrubbing will not clear your skin. In fact, all that scrubbing can irritate your skin and make acne worse. The way to clear acne is with appropriate acne products and good skin care.

### **3. Use “noncomedogenic” (does not clog pores) cosmetics and toiletries.**

When buying cosmetics and other products that you will use on your skin or hair, be sure to look for ones labeled “noncomedogenic.” Makeup, sunscreen and toiletries that are not likely to cause acne state that they are “noncomedogenic” on the product.

### **4. Avoid aggravating your acne.**

Oily hair, sporting equipment that rubs against your skin and airborne grease—all can irritate and make your acne worse. Ways you can avoid these situations include:

- If you have oily hair, keep it off your face and wash it daily.
- Avoid using hair care products that contain oil, such as pomades and gels.
- Wear cotton clothing or moleskin under sporting equipment to avoid skin-to-equipment contact.

### **5. Give acne products enough time to do their job.**

Ask a dermatologist how much time is needed for each particular product to work. This way you’ll know when you can expect to see clearing and not stop using the product(s) before you see results. As a rule of thumb, it takes 6 to 8 weeks before you begin to see an improvement.

### **6. Use medications as directed.**

Using more medication than directed will not improve results. In fact, it can make acne worse by aggravating the skin. Be sure to read all labels and use accordingly or as instructed by a dermatologist.

## **7. Avoid excess exposure to sunlight, and do not use tanning booths or sun lamps.**

Contrary to popular belief, tanning does not clear acne; it simply masks acne. Tanning also increases one's risk of developing melanoma and other skin cancers. Additionally, some acne treatments can increase the skin's sensitivity to sunlight and ultraviolet light from tanning booths and sun lamps. If you have acne, it is important to protect your skin by following sun-protection practices, such as wearing sunscreen and avoiding sunburns.

### **Acne Myths**

**Myth #1:** Acne is caused by poor hygiene. If you believe this myth, and wash your skin hard and frequently, you can actually make your acne worse. Acne is not caused by dirt or surface skin oils. Although excess oils, dead skin and a day's accumulation of dust on the skin look unsightly, they should not be removed by hand scrubbing. Vigorous washing and scrubbing will actually irritate the skin and make acne worse. The best approach to hygiene and acne: Gently wash your face twice a day with an acne face wash, pat dry--and use an appropriate acne treatment for the acne.

**Myth #2:** Acne is caused by diet. Extensive scientific studies have not found a connection between diet and acne. In other words, food does not cause acne. Not chocolate. Not french fries. Not pizza. Nonetheless, some people insist that certain foods affect their acne. In that case, avoid those foods. Besides, eating a balanced diet always makes sense. However, according to the scientific evidence, if acne is being treated properly, there's no need to worry about food affecting the acne.

**Myth #3:** Acne is caused by stress. The ordinary stress of day-to-day living is not an important factor in acne. Severe stress that needs medical attention is sometimes treated with drugs that can cause acne as a side effect. If you think you may have acne related to a drug prescribed for stress or depression, you should consult your physician.

**Myth #4:** Acne is just a cosmetic disease. Yes, acne does affect the way people look and is not otherwise a serious threat to a person's physical health. However, acne can result in permanent physical scars--plus, acne itself as well as its scars can affect the way people feel about themselves to the point of affecting their lives.

**Myth #5:** You just have to let acne run its course. The truth is, acne can be cleared up. If the acne products you have tried haven't worked, consider seeing a dermatologist. With the products available today, there is no reason why someone has to endure acne or get acne scars.