

ACNE

PATIENT INFORMATION & INSTRUCTIONS

ACNE OVERVIEW

There are many different acne treatments. Beating acne requires the right treatment for your lifestyle, your goals and your acne severity. You will find an overview of treatment options followed by your recommended plan.

TREATMENT OPTIONS: TOPICAL MEDICATIONS

Over the Counter Acne Products:

- **Ingredients:** Benzoyl peroxide, azelaic acid, tea tree oil, salicylic acid, niacinamide, sulfur, gluconolactone, oral zinc supplementation or topical zinc
- **Products we like:** Natuirum Niacinamide Gelee cleanser, Laneige water bank cream moisturizer, Acne Free Benzoyl Peroxide cleanser, Ceave PM moisturizer, La Roche Posay Touleraïne double repair moisturizer, Cerave hydrating cleanser, Cetaphil oil control foaming cleanser, The Ordinary Azelaic Acid suspension, Cerave Acne foaming cream cleanser with Benzoyl Peroxide, Paula's Choice BHA liquid Exfoliant 2%, La Roche-posay Effaclar Mat Oil-Free mattifying moisturizer

Benzoyl Peroxide Wash: An over the counter acne medication wash that helps cleanse and dry. Strengths range from 2.5%-10% and the higher strengths can be a little more irritating to the face. A couple common brands from the drug store include: Acne Free 2.5%, Cerave 4% BPO, Panoxyl, Neutrogena Stubborn Acne, Differin cleanser and Clean and Clear continuous control among others.

- **How To Use:** Apply to face, chest and back in the shower and wait 3-5 minutes before washing it off. This can bleach towels and other fabrics.
- **Side Effects:** This product can commonly cause redness and peeling and rarely you can have an allergic reaction to this medication.

Clindamycin Lotion: This is an antibiotic lotion to combat the acne causing bacteria. It is best used in combination with Benzoyl Peroxide wash due to high bacterial resistance rates.

- **How To Use:** Apply a thin layer to entire area after washing face and or body.

Benzaclin / Duac: This is a combination of benzoyl peroxide and clindamycin lotion (an antibiotic).

- **How To Use:** Wash your face in the AM with a gentle (non-acne medicated cleanser) and then apply a thin a thin layer on your face. This medication can bleach clothing, towels etc.
- **Side Effects:** This product can commonly cause redness and peeling and rarely you can have an allergic reaction to this medication.

Dapsone (Aczone): This is also a topical antibiotic that is used once daily for acne. This active ingredient can be compounded with other ingredients and a common one used for adult female acne is mixed with Hyaluronic acid and Niacinamide.

- **How To Use:** Apply a thin layer to entire area after washing face and or body.
- **Side Effects:** Dryness and itching. If used in combination with Benzoyl Peroxide it may cause your skin to temporarily turn yellow/orange at the applications site. If you have an allergy to sulfa let your provider know as this may also illicit a reaction.

ACNE

PATIENT INFORMATION & INSTRUCTIONS

(CONTINUED) TREATMENT OPTIONS: TOPICAL MEDICATIONS

Winlevi: This is a topical medication that works by stopping acne hormones from reaching their target in the skin, which reduces sebum and inflammation.

- **How To Use:** Apply a thin layer to entire area after washing face and or body. This medication can be used 1-2 times daily.
- **Side Effects:** Reddening, scaling and itching of the skin being treated.

Retinoid (Adapalene/Tretinoin/Tazorac, Renova): This is a vitamin A derivative that is FDA approved for the treatment of acne and also helps with skin rejuvenation. Retinoids can reduce the severity of acne lesions, but results rely on consistent use. Retinoids may make acne a little worse when the medication is first started. They also help improve wrinkles, increase collagen production and repair sun damaged skin.

- **How To Use:** Wash your face with a mild, non-acne medicated cleanser. Make sure skin is dry and apply a pea size amount to the entire face. Start out slowly, only 2-3 times a week and work up to nightly over time. This is not a spot treatment, but a preventive treatment, so you want to treat the entire face. Wash your hands after use. Avoid applying right around the eyes, mouth, or open cuts. Most formulations are inactivated by sunlight, so it is best to use at night time.
- **Side Effects:** A transition period that involves redness and peeling of skin is common (can last 6-12 wks). This period is temporary and will stop, so try and continue use through this period if mild. If irritation is severe or you experience burning, itchy or a rash develops take some nights off. Start very slowly with this medication, especially if you have sensitive skin. A certain degree of peeling is a good sign. Retinoids can also increase sun, wind and cold sensitivity, use a good sun block. Stop the application of retinoids before procedures such as waxing or chemical peels. Swelling is not a normal reaction, if this occurs please stop the medication and call. This medication is a pregnancy category C and should not be used while pregnant.

TREATMENT OPTIONS: ORAL MEDICATIONS

Doxycycline/Minocycline: This class of antibiotic is used to treat certain types of infections; as well as to help treat acne and other skin diseases due to its anti-inflammatory affects.

- **How To Use:** Be sure to take the medication WITH food. It is ok to take it with dairy products, but best to take with some water as well and not lay down for 30 minutes.
- **Side Effects:** The most common side effects to these antibiotics are upset stomach. Other common side effects include: Increased sun sensitivity; you will burn much more easily while taking this medication so be careful in the sun, heartburn, headaches, and ringing in the ears.

Oral Contraceptive Pill (OCP): There are four OCPs that have been FDA approved for improving acne, but all the combination (estrogen and progestin) pills could possibly help prevent acne breakouts.

- **Side Effects:** All pills can slightly increase your risk for blood clots as well as other side effects. You should not smoke while on OCP's as this further increases your risk of blood clot or stroke. You should also inform your healthcare provider if you or family member has a blood clotting disorder. Other common side effects include: Nausea, headaches, weight change, and mood changes.

ACNE

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(CONTINUED) TREATMENT OPTIONS: ORAL MEDICATIONS

Spironolactone: This is not a birth control pill and does not alter how your body produces hormone. This is a hormone blocking pill, and often helps with adult female acne that worsens with menses.

- **How To Use:** Taking pills before bed can help with any side effects.
- **Side Effects:** It is also a diuretic, so rarely some patients can develop a drop in blood pressure or lightheadedness, if severe stop the medication and call your provider. Breast tenderness and spotting in between cycles or irregular periods. This medicine can also rarely raise potassium levels, so limit taking potassium supplements when on this medication. Maintain adequate hydration is important as electrolyte abnormalities increase with dehydration. This medication can cause fetal defects, so DO NOT become pregnant on this medication and stay on some form of contraception.

Isotretinoin (Accutane): Accutane works by shrinking the oil glands in your skin, reducing oil production, and helping to unclog pores. This can significantly reduce acne breakouts and inflammation. The medication itself is vitamin A. Accutane treatment typically lasts 4-6 months.

- **How To Use:** Amount and frequency varies, however the trick to Accutane is combating the side effects that occur as a result of overall dryness. See separate Accutane: How to Survive it handout.
- **Side Effects:** Very dry skin, dry eyes, increased sun sensitivity, muscle aches, joint pain, headaches and changes in mood. Accutane can also cause a dryness rash that can be treated with a simple steroid cream as needed if it occurs. The side effect profile is monitored closely with monthly visits. The largest side effect is the link Accutane has with severe birth defects and requires enrollment in a government monitored program Ipledge.

ACNE & DIET

The topic of acne and food is rather controversial and the jury is still out on what foods are proven to help improve acne or worsen it. The strongest evidence for the link between diet and acne pertains to the glycemic index of foods and dairy products. Food with a high glycemic index are refined carbohydrates and sugars that are highly processed and easily broken down increasing blood sugar levels. These include foods such as; white bread and rice.

The spike in blood sugar levels can trigger a series of events that cause the skin to produce more oil and plug the pores leading to larger acne lesions.

If you are trying to optimize your diet to decrease acne outbreaks, avoid a lot of dairy products, especially skim milk, whey protein and foods with a high glycemic index.

ACNE

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MORNING ROUTINE

- Gentle Cleanser
- OTC Acne Cleanser
- Benzoyl Peroxide Wash
- Clindamycin Lotion
- Benzaclin / Duac
- Dapsone (Aczone)
- Winlevi
- Retinoid (Adapalene/Tretinoin/Tazorac, Renova)
- Moisturizer
- Doxycycline/Minocycline
- Oral Contraceptive Pill
- Spironolactone
- Accutane
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AT NIGHT ROUTINE

- Gentle Cleanser
- OTC Acne Cleanser
- Benzoyl Peroxide Wash
- Clindamycin Lotion
- Benzaclin / Duac
- Dapsone (Aczone)
- Winlevi
- Retinoid (Adapalene/Tretinoin/Tazorac, Renova)
- Moisturizer
- Doxycycline/Minocycline
- Oral Contraceptive Pill
- Spironolactone
- Accutane
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OTHER RESOURCES

We work hard to publish only best patient education and comprehensive resources. We want to be your trusted source of all skin information. You will find additional educational information by scanning the following QR codes.

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Education Blog*



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