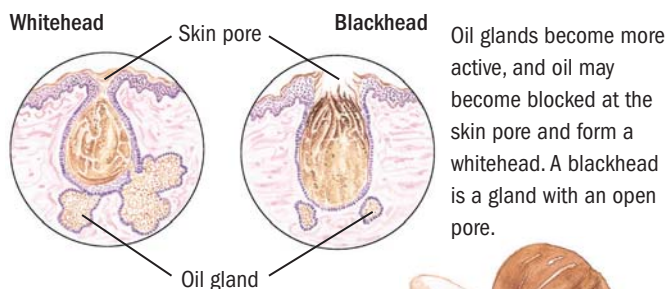


MANAGING YOUR ACNE

dr jayaprakash.k.p., asst. prof.ich,govt.mch,kottayam,drjayaprakashkp@gmail.com
mob:9447368066



Acne is a very common condition, especially during adolescence. A number of things can help control it. Together, you and your doctor can find something that works for you.



Oil glands become more active, and oil may become blocked at the skin pore and form a whitehead. A blackhead is a gland with an open pore.



Pimples and cysts form when oil leaks into surrounding skin and causes redness (inflammation) and infection. Squeezing pimples can also cause scarring.



The upper back may also be involved.



Acne can be very stressful for teenagers.

What Is Acne?

Acne vulgaris is called simply acne, pimples, or zits. Almost all teenagers have it. Acne usually gets better with age, but sometimes older people, especially women, can get acne.

What Causes Acne?

Male hormones present in both males and in lesser amounts in females increase during puberty and stimulate oil glands of the skin. In the midteens, skin oil (sebaceous) glands begin to produce more oil. Oily skin usually results, but in some people this oil is blocked at skin pore openings. Bacteria, oil, and other materials block these pores. Blocked oil backs up and forms whiteheads; if pores are open to the air, blackheads form. Blocked oil in the skin causes redness (inflammation) and infection, and then pimples and cysts. Boys usually have more oily skin than girls and often worse acne. Foods do not affect acne. Acne is not an infection, so it cannot be caught from someone else.

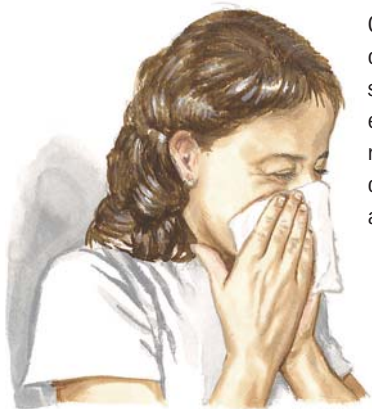
What Are the Symptoms of Acne?

A rash usually occurs on the face, shoulders, and back. The small bumps can be whiteheads, blackheads, or pimples with pus.

How Is Acne Diagnosed?

Usually, the doctor just does a skin examination. Sometimes blood tests may be done to help pick the best medicine and to monitor side effects from treatment.

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Gently wash your skin at least once a day. Products with salicylic acid may be very effective. Your doctor may also recommend special lotions or creams to apply to the acne-prone areas.

Participate in activities that are healthy, fun, and help reduce your stress.



Your doctor may suggest taking pills. Be sure to ask about side effects and the risks of using too much antibiotic medicine.

Be patient. Prescription and over-the-counter creams and pills take time to work. Give treatment at least 8 to 10 weeks to start having an effect.

How Is Acne Treated?

Whatever the treatment, a few weeks may pass before acne improves. Sometimes, acne may worsen before improving.

A healthy diet, regular exercise, daily skin care with salicylic acid compounds and cleansing soaps, and gentle washing (no scrubbing) are important.

All acne treatments work by preventing new acne. Treatment usually starts with lowest strength over-the-counter topical medicines (put on the skin). These drugs are usually antibiotics and peeling agents (comedolytics). Antibiotics include benzoyl peroxide, erythromycin, and clindamycin. The over-the-counter benzoyl peroxide has both peeling and antibiotic effects.

Additional prescription drugs include other peeling agents, antibiotics, and hormones.

Most people outgrow acne by their mid 20s. Rarely, severe cases may need special treatment, such as surgery.

DOs and DON'Ts in Managing Acne:

- ✓ **DO** eat a healthy diet, exercise regularly, and wash oily skin gently, at least twice daily, with medicated soap and water.
- ✓ **DO** use pills or creams according to your doctor's instruction.
- ✓ **DO** use oil-free cosmetics, suntan lotions, and shampoos.
- ✓ **DO** call your doctor if your acne gets worse despite treatment or if you have bad scarring.
- ✓ **DO** see a dermatologist if your doctor recommends it.
- ✓ **DO** call your doctor if you have emotional problems because of acne. Acne may cause embarrassment, anxiety, and social difficulties.
- ⊗ **DON'T** be impatient. Improvement usually takes a few weeks.
- ⊗ **DON'T** avoid specific foods unless you find that they make your acne worse.
- ⊗ **DON'T** pinch, squeeze, or pick your pimples. Infection and scarring can result.
- ⊗ **DON'T** sunbathe. It can make acne worse.
- ⊗ **DON'T** use over-the-counter acne drugs while you take prescription drugs, unless your doctor knows.

FROM THE DESK OF

NOTES

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the following source:

- American Academy of Dermatology
930 North Meachum Road
Schaumburg, IL 60173
Tel: (866) 503-7546
Website: <http://www.aad.org/>