

# ACNE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW TO GET CLEAR

While acne can never be cured, it can be controlled. Here are some things you can do to help control your acne.

- Get enough rest and *reduce your stress*. The adrenal gland promotes oil production, which leads to clogged pores; in acne-prone individuals, stress stimulates the adrenal gland.
- Avoid foods, vitamin supplements and sports drinks/bars containing *iodides*. Iodized salt, seafood, fish, seaweed, fast foods and dairy products (because cows lick iodized salt licks) and kelp tablets (which some people take for thyroid support) all contain iodides. (See the Face Reality "Foods High in Iodides" handout for a more complete list).  
  
\*\* Vitamins that are iodide-free include GNC Women's Ultra Mega without iron & iodine and Dermavites, which can be purchased online.
- Note that chocolate does not aggravate acne. Greasy foods aggravate acne only because they contain *high levels of salt*.
- Avoid foods containing *androgen hormones*. Androgens exacerbate acne and are present in peanuts, peanut oil, peanut butter, corn oil, wheat germ, shellfish, organ meats, sweetbreads, beef and liver. Note that other nuts do not contain androgen hormones.
- Beware the *swimming pool*. Some swimming pool disinfectants contain iodides and chlorine, which can cause skin problems for frequent swimmers. Many swimmers find that the combination of hot and humid weather, the physical exercise of swimming and chlorinated pools can cause major acne flare-ups.
- *Do not pick*. If a breakout is really annoying, call us and we will fit you in the schedule for a quick extraction free of charge. Instead of picking, rub ice on pustules and pimples for about five minutes, twice a day. Treat pimples and pustules with ice when they are first forming and they most likely will go away.
- Use *fragrance-free detergents* such as Cheer Free, All Free & Clear, Tide Free or Arm & Hammer Free. Do not use fabric softeners and/or fabric softener sheets in the dryer, especially on pillowcases, because they cause a waxy residue that can clog pores on acne-prone individuals. There is some evidence that water softeners can lead to acne, especially those containing high amounts of potassium chloride.  
  
\*\* If you cannot tolerate static cling in your dryer, try anti-static balls like Dryer-Max Anti-Static Balls (available at Bed Bath & Beyond).

- Avoid *low-estrogen birth control pills*, Norplant, Provera, Depo-Provera, and the progesterone hormone replacement Premarin. If you have polycystic ovaries, they will cause hormonal changes and breakouts. Also, birth control pills may delay the onset of acne. Once you stop taking the Pill, you may experience acne that it has thus far prevented
- *Do not use cosmetics or hair products that contain pore-clogging ingredients.* These ingredients cause microcomedones to form in certain individuals, resulting in various lesions ranging from clogged pores and blackheads to inflammatory pustules. Pore-clogging ingredients include *isopropyl myristate, sodium lauryl sulfate, laureth-4, natural Vitamin E, most natural oils and cocoa butter.*

Benzoyl Peroxide medications found at cosmetic departments may contain isopropyl myristate and laureth-4 or oils that impede the active ingredient of benzoyl peroxide.

(See the extended list of pore-clogging ingredients on the other side of this handout.)

- *Limit sun exposure and use a sunscreen.* Although sun exposure causes desirable scaling and drying, it also damages the skin follicles, exacerbates hyper-pigmentation, and causes skin cancer and premature aging. Warm climates with heat and humidity can exacerbate acne
- According to the results in clinical trials, zinc has been shown to be useful in treating acne – sometimes as effective as antibiotics in reducing inflamed acne. But note that research indicates that the form of zinc taken may be important: zinc monomethionine is more readily absorbed by the body than zinc sulfate or zinc gluconate. *It is best to take zinc with food and not on an empty stomach.*
- *Omega-3 oils* have anti-inflammatory properties. For those who suffer from acne, omega-3's may help regulate hormones.
- *Probiotics* are highly recommended for people who have, in the past, used antibiotics over the long term. Probiotics help to repopulate the gut with "friendly" bacteria, thereby encouraging better digestion, improved immunity and optimum nutrition absorption. Recommended brands include Flora Smart or Ultimate Flora by Renew Life and Dr. Ohirra, which is available at Amazon.com and Whole Foods.