

Acne Skin Care

Should I be washing my face more because I have acne and what should I use?

Acne has many contributing factors but dirty skin is not really one of them! Over cleaning will dry out the skin or risk inflaming it further. Cleansing the skin morning and evening and removing any make up at the end of the day is usually sufficient. Most of the leading cosmeceutical companies have cleansers for acne prone skin, eg Effaclar by La Roche Posay, Sebium by Bioderma and Clear and Defend by Neutrogena

Should I exfoliate?

The first stage of acne formation is a blocked pore and therefore removing the debris from the skin surface seems logical. However, patients undergoing active acne treatment often have very sensitive skin and exfoliation can exacerbate this. Over the counter scrubs can be useful for mild acne not requiring harsh prescription treatments and can be part of the regime once acne has been successfully treated to prevent any acne recurring.

What sort of moisturiser should I be using?

Acne is commonly associated with having a greasy skin complexion. This is due to sebum production, the body's natural moisturiser. Additional moisturisers are not always necessary and can exacerbate acne by blocking the pores. A number of acne treatments do dry the skin. If a moisturiser is needed, you are advised to use as little as possible and one aimed at acne prone skin. These tend to avoid oils that make acne worse and sometimes are combined with anti-acne treatments like Salicylic acid. Some moisturisers are combined with sunscreen. I would avoid these during the Autumn, Winter and early Spring, when sunscreen is not usually needed. Sunscreens often exacerbate acne.

For patients on Isotretinoin, I tend to recommend avoiding a moisturiser that has active anti-acne ingredients as they may be too harsh. For example, you can use Effaclar H by La Roche Posay instead of the more commonly used Effaclar Duo+, which has active anti-acne treatments.

I don't like the appearance of my skin, can I use make up?

All make up will block the pores to some extent but there are ranges which are better formulated for acne prone skin. These tend to be lighter and avoid certain oils which make acne worse. Examples include bareMinerals blemish rescue skin loose powder and Clinique Anti-blemish solutions liquid make up.

Make up should be removed at the end of the day with a good cleanser.

Are there any lifestyle measures that improve acne?

Acne may get worse with stress, alcohol, smoking, poor diet, lack of sleep, friction, hormones and medications. Some of these are easier to control than others.



Managing stress and trying to maintain a healthy work/life balance with good quality sleep, a healthy diet and limiting alcohol and avoiding smoking may help.

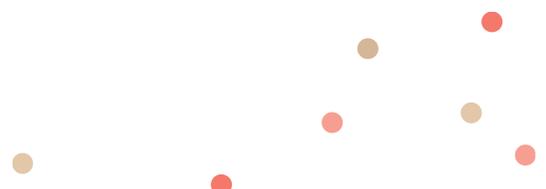
Tight clothing or wearing bags with straps, can cause acne.

If you are starting a contraceptive pill and have suffered with acne, then it is worth making sure the pill is suitable for your skin type. Some pills can improve the skin and others make it worse. I tend to recommend a combined pill containing drospirinone, a derivative of Spirinolactone, which has anti-male hormone properties.

Is there a daily regime I should be following?

There is no one solution that works for everyone but the following is a sensible approach:

- 1) Use a cleanser for acne prone skin in the morning
- 2) If your skin is very dry, use a moisturiser for acne prone skin, preferably without sunscreen unless during the summer months
- 3) If needing to cover up acne during the day, choose a camouflage product for acne prone skin, and use as little as you can get away with
- 4) Remove make up and cleanse the skin at the end of the day
- 5) Apply a moisturiser, if necessary, and allow to soak in for 30 mins
- 6) Apply active acne treatments before going to bed



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