

The Facial Room™

ACNE & SKIN CARE CLINIC



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.

1. Get enough rest and *reduce your stress*. The adrenal gland promotes oil production, which leads to clogged pores; in the acne-prone individual stress stimulates the adrenal gland.
2. 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 especially kelp tablets (which some people take for thyroid support) all contain iodides. See iodine content foods 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 contrary to popular notion, chocolate does not aggravate acne (unless it contains salt, which most does). Greasy foods aggravate acne only because they contain *high levels of salt*.

3. 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.
4. Beware of 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 the chlorinated pools, can cause major acne flare-ups.
5. *Do not pick*. 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. Dab on a spot treatment on the pustule a few times during the day and before bed at night. You can use Benzoyl Peroxide for this, but keep it only on the spot so the surrounding tissue won't get dry.
6. 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 as 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 available at Bed, Bath & Beyond**.

7. Avoid *low-estrogen birth control pills*, Norplant, Provera, and 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 and once off them, you may experience the acne you would've had before taking them. See handout about birth control pills for more information.
8. *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, cetyl alcohol, sodium lauryl sulfate, laureth-4, natural Vitamin E, most natural oils, cocoa butter and D & C red dyes** all agitate acne.

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 handout on Pore Clogging Ingredients in Skin Care for a complete list.
9. *Limit sun exposure and always use a sunscreen.* Although sun exposure causes desirable scaling and drying, it also damages the skin follicles, exacerbates hyperpigmentation, causes skin cancer, and premature aging, and can cause “solar acne” later in life, as well as “Acne Majorca” also caused by sunlight. Warm climates with heat and humidity can exacerbate acne.
10. According to the results of a number of clinical trials, zinc has been shown to be useful in treating acne – Sometimes as effective as antibiotics in reducing inflamed acne. Research indicates that the form of zinc taken may be important: zinc monomethionine is more readily absorbed by the body than either zinc sulfate or zinc gluconate. *It is best to take zinc with food and not on an empty stomach.*
11. *Omega-3 oils* have anti-inflammatory properties. For those who suffer from acne, omega-3's may help regulate hormones.
12. *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.**