

# WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ACNE

In the Clinic  
Annals of Internal Medicine  
annals.org

## What is acne?

- Acne occurs when skin pores get plugged up and swell. These are called pimples or zits. You can have acne on the face, neck, chest, back, and shoulders.
- Acne usually occurs in teenagers and clears up at around age 20 years, but adults can also have acne.
- The exact cause of acne is not known, but you are more likely to have acne if it runs in your family.
- Teenage hormones, oily skin, and certain bacteria on the skin can make acne worse.
- Acne is not caused by foods. But if you think that some foods make you break out, then do not eat them.

## What can I do on my own to keep from getting acne or to make it better?

- Wash your face with a gentle soap 2 times per day.
- Check the label on skin-care products for the words "noncomedogenic," "non-pore-clogging," or "oil-free."
- You can get many acne medicines at the drugstore. If your acne is mild, try a product that contains benzoyl peroxide or salicylic acid.
- If you have acne that is very bad, leaves scars, or does not get better with non-prescription medicine, see your doctor.

## What will my doctor do for acne?

- Your doctor may give you lotions, gels, creams, or pills. Often, these pills are antibiotics or birth-control pills.
- A very strong acne medicine is called isotretinoin (trade names: Accutane, Amnesteem, Claravis, Sotret). It is for very bad acne that does not get better with other medicines.



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## For More Information

American Academy of Dermatology

[www.skincarephysicians.com/acnetet/FAQ.html](http://www.skincarephysicians.com/acnetet/FAQ.html)

[www.aad.org/public/publications/pamphlets/common\\_acne.html?media=print](http://www.aad.org/public/publications/pamphlets/common_acne.html?media=print)

Medline Plus

[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/tutorials/acne/htm/index.htm](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/tutorials/acne/htm/index.htm)

National Institute of Arthritis and  
Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases

[www.niams.nih.gov/Health\\_Info/Acne/default.asp](http://www.niams.nih.gov/Health_Info/Acne/default.asp)