

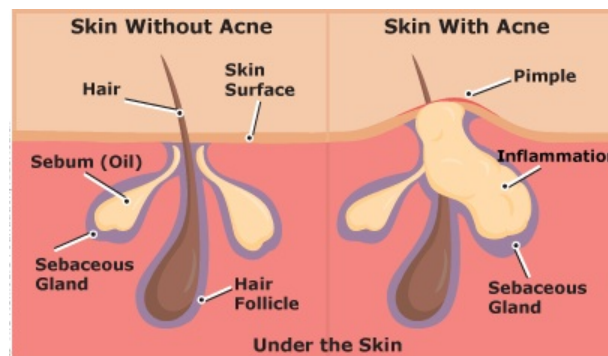
## ACNE

Acne is a very common issue in teenagers. About 8/10 preteens and teens have acne, along with many adults.

### Definition

Acne is a skin condition that shows up as different types of bumps. These include whiteheads, blackheads, red bumps (papules) and bumps filled with pus (pustules). In severe acne, deep nodules or cysts can occur.

Your skin is covered with tiny holes called follicles or pores. These pores contain sebaceous glands (oil glands) that make sebum, or oil that moistens your hair and skin. Sometimes a pore gets clogged up with too much sebum, skin cells, and bacteria. This can lead to acne.



### Causes

Kids and teens often get acne because of hormone changes that come with puberty. Puberty hormones stimulate the glands to make more sebum that clogs the pores and leads to acne. It is not caused by diet or a lack of hygiene. There are a number of things that can worsen acne including stress, certain cosmetic, or some medications.

### Treatment

Some tips to prevent pimples:

- Wash your face once or twice a day with warm water and a mild soap or cleanser
- Don't scrub your face, wash gently using your hands instead of a washcloth
- Make sure all your makeup, moisturizer, and sunscreen is "oil free", "noncomedogenic" or "nonacnegenic"
- Remove all your makeup at night
- Keep hair sprays and gels away from your face as they can clog pores
- If you have long hair, keep it away from your face and wash it regularly to reduce oil
- Avoid baseball caps or other hats if they are worsening acne along your hairline
- Try not to touch your face and *don't pick, squeeze, or pop!*

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### **Over the counter treatments:**

- Products with benzoyl peroxide kills the bacteria that can lead to acne
- Products with salicylic acid causes skin/pores to dry out
- Follow instructions exactly and don't use more than instructed as these products can be drying and irritating to the skin
- Be patient, acne medications can take weeks to months to work so give everything a good trial (4-8 weeks)

### **Prescription treatments:**

If your acne is not responding to over the counter treatments, your doctor may prescribe medications which can include:

- Topical treatments that may contain benzoyl peroxide, salicylic acid, antibiotics, or retinoids (which help unclog pores) or a combination of these ingredients
- Oral contraceptive pill
- Oral antibiotics
- For severe acne, oral isotretinoin (Accutane) may be recommended

Sometimes, your pediatrician will refer you to a dermatologist (skin doctor) for further assessment and treatment.