

Ask Doctor Section

Question:

Hi Apex,

I am 26 years old and my acne problem has been bothering me for years, since adolescence. Had been to the doctor and taken antibiotics both orally and topically. Did help but acne returns after I stopped taking them. I don't wish to be on long term medications. Are there any other ways? Thank you, hope to hear from you soon.

Regards,

Elizabeth Chew

Answer:

Dear Elizabeth,

First of all we have to understand the etiology of Acne in order to treat and prevent further outbreaks. Long term medication is not a permanent solution to treating acne problems. It can be detrimental to our health.

What is Acne?

Acne is also known as pimples, whiteheads, blackheads and red bumps. It is due to the infection of clogged hair follicles. Acne can form on the face, back, shoulders, scalp and chest.

Acne occurs more commonly during adolescence, affecting an estimated 85% of teenagers, frequently continuing into adulthood.

What causes Acne?

Several factors have been identified leading to the formation of acne:

- Family history. Teenagers with acne often have other family members with acne problems as well.
- Bacteria called *Propionibacterium acnes* in the pores.
- Hormonal changes during puberty and menstrual cycle.
- Poor skincare hygiene and regime.
- Stress does not cause acne but make it worse.
- There is very little evidence to suggest that food such as peanuts, chocolates caused acne.
- Underlying medical conditions such as polycystic ovarian syndrome.

Do not

- Squeeze pimples, this will often leave unsightly acne scars and in some cases may be permanent.
- Over-moisturised the face. (*Adequate hydration to prevent drying of skin is sufficient. Cream moisturiser for acne prone skin is not recommended. Use soothing gel moisturizer instead. It does not clog pores and hydrates efficiently.*)
- Cover acne up with thick layers of foundation as this may lead to more clogged, inflamed pores.
- Practicing poor skincare hygiene and regime.
- Frequently touching face with hands, fringe or hair touching face or putting hands around chin area.
- For man: Areas around the sideburn and chin are prone to acne due to clogged and inflamed hair follicles, especially after shaving.

Treatment Options:

- Using products that contain anti-inflammatory properties and at the same time adequately hydrates the skin. From Apex Online Store, you can try: **Oily/ Acne Prone Skin Package**. (<http://www.onlineskincare.apex.sg/webshaper/store/viewProd.asp?pkProductItem=25>)
- **Medi-skin Centres** that provides specialized equipments and treatment regimes that effectively eliminates acne problems: **IDO's, Nardia, DermaK**. (www.idos.sg)