

Break Free from Acne Breakouts

The Facts for a Clear Complexion

Cathy Ulrich

A scourge of teenagers and adults alike, acne is one of the least understood of all skin conditions--and one of the most common. Usually associated with youth, acne can last well into the adult years and sometimes throughout life. It's tough to treat, especially if approached as a dirty skin problem. And if not cared for properly, acne can produce scarring on the face and body that is difficult, if not impossible, to clear. Let's look at some of the myths surrounding acne and replace them with the facts.

MYTH: ANY SKIN CONDITION THAT CAUSES PIMPLES, BLACKHEADS, AND REDNESS IS A FORM OF ACNE.

FACT: THERE ARE OTHER CONDITIONS THAT LOOK LIKE ACNE BUT AREN'T.

Gram negative folliculitis also looks like severe acne, producing pustules and deep cysts, but it's caused by a different kind of bacteria than common acne. This is a severe skin infection requiring medical treatment. It's usually the result of long-term tetracycline or topical antibiotic use, which sets up an environment for drug resistant bacteria. It can be treated with proper testing and administration of gram negative-specific antibiotics. It's important to see a dermatologist for appropriate testing and diagnosis before assuming that your skin condition is common acne.

MYTH: IF I HAVE ACNE, IT MEANS MY SKIN IS DIRTY. I SHOULD USE A STRONGER CLEANSER.

FACT: HARSH CLEANSERS AND EXCESSIVE

"Share your knowledge. It's a way to achieve immortality."

-Dalai Lama



Acne-free skin can be accomplished with the right products and treatments for your complexion.

Several other skin conditions look like acne. Rosacea is a hereditary skin condition that causes redness and can eventually develop tiny whiteheads and pimples if left untreated. Contact dermatitis can occur when the skin is exposed to harsh soaps or even sheets or pillowcases washed in harsh chemicals. It, too, can cause whiteheads, tiny pimples, and redness.

WASHING CAN MAKE ACNE WORSE.

It's true that excessive oil on the skin can clog pores, but harsh cleansers and soaps will irritate the skin, making acne worse. Use a mild cleanser that doesn't dry your skin. Wash twice a day--before applying makeup in the morning and before bed. It's essential to cleanse your skin prior to

Continued on page 2

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In this Issue

Break Free from Acne Breakouts
Pre-Session Yoga Moves for Calm
Navigating Online Health Information

Continued from page 1

going to sleep to remove makeup, dirt, and pollutants. Use a makeup that is water-based and noncomedogenic (non-clogging), and avoid cold creams or lotions that leave a greasy film. Your skin care professional is trained to evaluate your skin type and offer guidance about proper daily skin care and products. Consult your esthetician about the skin care and makeup that's right for you.

MYTH: EATING CHOCOLATE AND FRIED FOODS MAKES ME BREAK OUT.

FACT: A HEALTHY DIET GREATLY CONTRIBUTES TO HEALTHY SKIN, BUT EATING FOODS, SUCH AS CHOCOLATE, DOESN'T BY ITSELF CAUSE ACNE BREAKOUTS.

Research has never been able to prove that eating specific foods--even fried foods--causes acne. However, certain foods may aggravate it. On the other hand, eating a healthy diet contributes to better skin, especially foods rich in beta-carotene, such as spinach, apricots, peaches, sweet potatoes, and carrots. These provide the raw materials for the body to produce vitamin A, which is essential for cell growth and skin health. Citrus, tomatoes, and berries contain vitamin C, a powerful antioxidant that strengthens the immune system and helps the body fight bacteria that can cause acne. A healthy diet provides the building blocks for healthier skin, but eating chocolate or sweets occasionally won't cause acne flare-ups.

MYTH: SUNBATHING CLEARS ACNE.

FACT: WHILE LIMITED EXPOSURE TO UV RAYS FROM THE SUN MAY HELP CLEAR EXISTING PIMPLES, EXTENDED EXPOSURE CAN MAKE ACNE WORSE.

Extended sun exposure can damage skin, causing peeling and flaking, which translates into blocked pores--a primary cause of acne. In addition, sunbathing dries skin, which stimulates oil production. Excess oil combines with extra dead skin cells from sun damage, forming the perfect environment for blocked pores and breakouts. Ask your esthetician about oil-free sunscreen products for your specific skin type and use them daily. You'll not only help reduce acne, you'll also prevent skin damage that causes wrinkles.

MYTH: I'LL GROW OUT OF IT.

FACT: HALF OF ALL ADULT WOMEN AND ONE-FOURTH OF ALL ADULT MEN HAVE SOME DEGREE OF ACNE SYMPTOMS.

While it's more common in teenagers, acne is prevalent in adults as well. Some people make it through their teenage years only to develop acne later in life. The hormone changes experienced during pregnancy can cause adult-onset acne, but other conditions--the use of certain medications, exposure to chemicals, and other hormonal changes experienced in adulthood--can also produce acne symptoms long after adolescence.

MYTH: I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO UNDERSTANDS MY COMPLICATED SKIN.

FACT: YOUR ESTHETICIAN CAN HELP.

Your esthetician may recommend you see a dermatologist to help correctly diagnose and treat your skin condition, and she can certainly help direct you in the best ways to help support a healthy complexion. By guiding you to the right skin care products and makeup and teaching you how to use them, your skin

care professional can be an important part of your team. Monthly facials specifically designed to gently cleanse and exfoliate your skin will also aid in healing and prevention.

Acne requires special attention in your daily skin care regimen and lifestyle. Let your esthetician support you in this journey to health through regular treatments and sound education.



Ask your esthetician about proper face washing techniques.

Pre-Session Yoga Moves for Calm

Mary Beth Braun

It's one of those mornings. Your alarm didn't go off and you have an appointment in an hour. How can you quickly collect and calm yourself enough to be fully present for the day ahead? Breath and yoga.

BREATH

Take this time to center and calm yourself. Start by channeling your yoga instructor or massage therapist and begin with breath (pranayama): inhaling to the count of three and exhaling to the count of six. Do this three times and move on to do a few yoga poses (asanas).

YOGA

You remember a few basic yoga poses from class, right? Try these two: simple seated twist and standing half moon.

SIMPLE SEATED TWIST

Continuing to use your breath, sit on the floor in an easy, cross-legged pose and begin simple seated twist. Raise the crown of your head to the ceiling,

elongating your neck and spine. Inhale and exhale, then twist to the left. Exhaling, move through center, and repeat on the right, continuing to inhale and exhale.

STANDING HALF MOON, BIKRAM STYLE

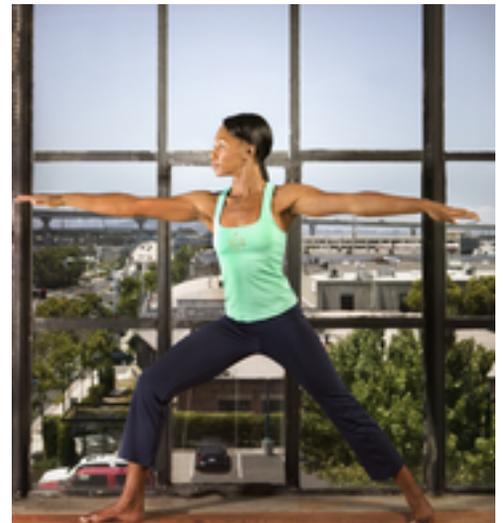
From there, step your right foot forward, followed by your left foot, and slowly roll up one vertebrae at a time until you are standing upright with your feet firmly grounded into the earth.

Feeling your feet firmly grounded, raise your hands overhead, taking the wrinkles out of your neck and elongating your spine. Inhale, exhale, and side bend to the right. Once there, exhale and feel your side body open up as you press your foot into the earth to enhance the stretch. Inhaling through center, exhale and bend to the left. Return to your center and take one more deep breath in and out.

You feel better, right? Now, let go of that harried morning and begin your

day fully present and centered.

Mary Beth Braun is a certified massage therapist based in Indianapolis, Indiana.



Channel your inner yoga instructor.

Navigating Online Health Information

Getting medical information on the Internet might be easy, but relying on it can be dangerous--rumors, misunderstandings, biased opinions, and outright lies await. Here are some tips for using the Internet effectively as part of your health care.

Getting Good Information

"Start at Web resources dedicated to providing only peer-reviewed medical information," says library science expert Sean Eads. "WebMD.com and Healthfinder.gov are two excellent resources where the articles are researched and written by professionals." Eads recommends avoiding websites like Wikipedia or Yahoo! Answers where anyone can provide unverified information.

Other options for information include

AskDrWiki.com, where articles can only be composed and edited by qualified medical professionals. For a more academic viewpoint of conditions, Eads suggests Searchmedica.com, which compiles medical journal articles, clinical trials, and other health magazines into its searchable database.

Trust the Professionals

Internet sources should not be used in place of health-care professionals, experts say, but rather as a supplemental tool to enable you to be a better advocate for yourself. Gather the knowledge you need to be informed and ask intelligent questions, but remember that consulting a website is not a substitute for a visit to a health-care professional.

One advantage that the Internet does have is its ability to foster connections

between people living with similar conditions. A September 2010 Pew Internet survey shows that 1 in 5 Internet users have sought out someone with the same medical condition they had. Building an online community can allow people to share experiences, and provide support across long distances and in situations where a condition is less common.

Find a Balance

Recognizing both the benefits and shortcomings of these websites is necessary to utilizing them most effectively. By using the voices of many to become more informed, you can be more involved when listening to the reliable voice of a qualified health professional.

*"Eat to live, and
not live to eat."*

-Benjamin Franklin

Summer is quickly passing.....rain, rain go away. Stay dry and safe! Walkers and runners, please proceed with care. Enjoy the longer, lighter days. Memories in the making for the vacationers, family and friends visiting, cookouts, gatherings of all kinds, and savor a little solitude! Enjoy, Julia

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