

# *Get It Off!*

**Natural, Over-the-Counter,  
Prescription, and Surgical Ways  
to Clear Up Your ACNE**

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## CHAPTER 1 – What Is Acne?

What is acne? Certainly, most of us know what it is, simply because we have had to experience it at one time or another in our lives. But, in case a definition is needed, here is a short one. Acne is a dermatological term that includes clogged pores, pimples and lumps or cysts that occur on the face, neck, chest, back, shoulders, and upper arms.

Acne occurs most commonly in teenagers, but is not limited to any age group, afflicting even adults in their forties. This disease has many varieties, and although none are life threatening, the more severe cases of acne can be disfiguring, leaving permanent scars on affected areas.

The physical changes in body tissue - or lesions - which acne causes are described in five ways: *comedos*, *papule*, *pustule*, *nodule* and *cyst*. Further, these terms denote range or severity, with comedo (also known as blackheads and whiteheads) at one end and nodules or cysts at the other.

As stated above, acne is most common among teenagers, affecting teens between the ages 12 and 17. Usually, these mild cases are cleared up with over-the-counter treatments or it usually goes away by itself by the early twenties.

Special note: Although acne affects both girls and boys equally, there are some distinctions. Young men are more likely to have severe, long-term acne while women can have reoccurring or intermittent acne well into adulthood due to hormonal changes and cosmetics.

Now that we have defined just *what* acne is, we can move on to the subject of this book. A guide to acne: what types are there, how to treat it, and current myths circulating about it. The hope is that the reader will come away having gained a clearer understanding of acne in its various forms, how it can be combated against and how to reduce its impact upon the lives of those who suffer from it.

This is by no means an exhaustive guide on the subject nor is it a clinical journal, but is at the very least, an introduction and a source upon which to do further study into the causes and cures of acne in all its forms.

## CHAPTER 2 – Acne Myths

Many of the problems facing those who are trying to deal with acne are the pervasive sources of misinformation out there regarding the causes of acne. Despite the numerous valid sources of information on and about acne that are now available, these myths persist and are passed on by word-of-mouth to those unfortunate enough to suffer from the disease. Rather than helping people find solutions and treatments to alleviate the symptoms, problems are often compounded. Ill-advised treatments based off these myths can have less than effective results and can often do further damage in the case of severe acne.

In light of the influence that these myths can have, both on understanding acne in general and the courses of treatment in particular, it would be wise to start with a quick overview of some of the more common myths that are out there. After this we can move on to the question of what the actual causes of acne might be.

### **Myth #1: Acne is caused by poor hygiene.**

It doesn't matter how often, how ritually, you scrub your face and other areas affected by acne; this has little bearing on either the status of a current breakout or the creation of new problems. In fact, this sort of rigorous regimen of washing and scrubbing can actually irritate skin and make the acne worse, not better.

This doesn't mean that hygiene isn't important. In fact, good hygiene can help reduce the effects of acne if used in conjunction with acne treatment products. Rather than frequent, harsh washing, it is generally recommended that you wash your face one to two times a day with mild soap and then pat it dry - don't scrub dry.

### **Myth #2: Acne is caused by diet.**

“Don’t eat chocolate, it will give you pimples!”

“Eating greasy foods can give you zits.”

Most of you have heard these and other similar statements before, right? What they are saying, in effect, is that what you eat can cause acne. But, what they are saying isn’t true. It is a myth, one of the more popular ones actually, about the causes of acne. Extensive scientific research has been conducted, searching for possible correlations between one’s diet and a possible cause of acne, and none have found anything conclusive.

However, each of us is different. Some people notice that breakouts are worse after eating certain foods--and the kinds of food differ with each person. For example, some people may notice breakouts after eating chocolate; while others have no effects with chocolate. Instead, they notice breakouts occurring after they drink too much coffee or caffeine. These are just examples but they might be worth heeding. If there is some sort of food or drink that might be affecting your acne, then cut back and see if that helps.

**Myth #3: Acne is caused by stress.**

Stress is not a direct cause of acne, but it is true that some types of stress can cause the body to produce a hormone called *cortisol*, which can irritate existing acne. Indirectly, some medication that we take to alleviate or control extreme stress or emotional problems like depression can be factors in the production of acne as well. In fact, some medicines have acne listed as a possible side effect.

**Myth #4: Acne will go away on its own.**

This is generally true, however sometimes acne needs treatment in order to be cleared up. With the selection of acne treatment products available today, there is no reason not to investigate and find what has the best results for those concerned. In some cases, a dermatologist should be consulted to pursue additional forms of treatment.

**Myth #5: Tanning clears up skin.**