

Teen Acne

Anyone of any age can get acne, even adults, but it is most common in teenagers. In fact, acne is considered a normal part of adolescence. Depending on its severity, acne can cause emotional distress and lead to scarring of the skin. The good news is that effective treatments are available — and the earlier treatment is started, the lower your risk of lasting physical and emotional damage.

Q: How is teen acne treated?

A: There are a wide range of acne treatments available. Your dermatologist will recommend an acne treatment that is best suited for you.

- For mild acne your dermatologist may prescribe a topical retinoid - or a combination with other acne medications, such as antibiotics.
- For the most severe cases of acne (such as cystic acne) an oral medication such as (Accutane, Sotret) may be prescribed. This daily oral medication has shown to be an effective treatment when other medications have failed.

Q: What is “sports” acne?

A: Teens who play sports, wear a backpack, or play a musical instrument that comes into contact with the face and neck may get a form of acne called *acne mechanica* (“sports” acne). This type of acne is caused by irritation to the skin from excessive heat or sweat, friction, or pressure. These are common causes of acne mechanica:

- Protective sports gear such as helmets and shoulder pads
- Tight clothing, particularly jeans and underwear
- Tight hats or headbands
- Back pack straps
- Musical instruments, such as the violin, tucked against the neck for hours

Q: What should I do if my teenager and I disagree about treatment?

A: It's important for teens and their parents to talk jointly with a dermatologist about all acne treatments. Ask questions about any concern. With so many acne treatments on the market, there's sure to be one that's effective and comfortable for both the teen and the parents.

Q: What can I do to help prevent new break outs?

A: Stick with your acne treatment. Once your acne improves or clears, you may need to continue your acne medication or other treatment to prevent new acne breakouts. Stopping treatment early will likely cause pimples to reappear. Talk to your dermatologist about how you can prevent new eruptions. You can also prevent new acne breakouts with self-care measures, such as washing your skin with a gentle cleanser and avoiding touching or picking at the problem areas.

Acne usually isn't a serious medical condition. But you may want to seek medical treatment for persistent pimples or inflamed cysts to avoid scarring or other damage to your skin. If acne and the scars it may have left are affecting your social relationships or self-esteem, you may also want to ask a dermatologist if your acne can be controlled or if your scars can be diminished.

Call Dermatology Associates of the Lowcountry (843) 689-5259 on Hilton Head Island or 843-705-0840 in Bluffton / Okatie.