

## PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET ACNE VULGARIS

### What is acne?

Acne or pimples can present as whiteheads and blackheads (close and open comedones) or inflamed papules, nodules or cysts.



Figure I: Mild acne



Figure II: Moderate acne



Figure III: Severe acne

### How is acne formed?

There are 4 main factors:

1. The skin cells are not shedded properly resulting in plugging of the pores.
2. Androgen hormones which are present in both males and females regulate oil production in the skin. During adolescence, increased androgens or increased response to androgens results in increased oil (sebum) production.

3. Overgrowth of *Propionibacterium acnes* bacteria within the hair follicles.
4. All the above factors cause inflammation and swelling of the hair follicle.

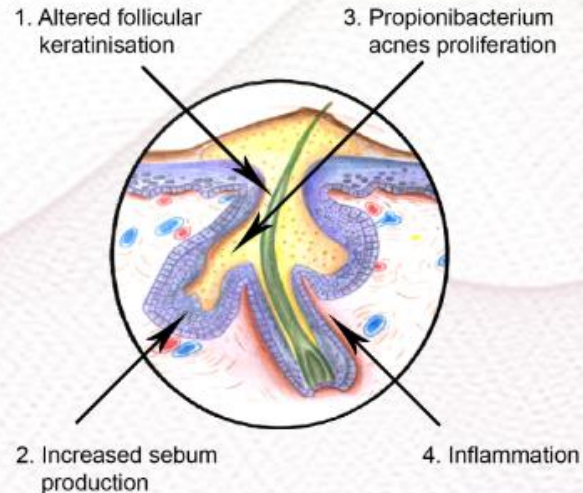


Figure IV: Mechanisms of acne formation

What is the role of diet and supplements in acne?  
Milk and foods with high glycemic index such as white rice, glutinous rice, white bread, cornflakes, fried noodles, boiled potato, watermelon and teh tarik may worsen acne

There is no scientific evidence to support the use of supplements to improve acne.

### What factors may worsen my acne?

1. Stress may worsen acne. In some studies among students, exam stress worsened their acne.
2. Smoking
3. Facial therapy

### What will happen if I squeeze my acne?

This may force infected material deeper into the skin, resulting in more inflammation and possible scarring.

Can patients with acne use cosmetic products?  
Yes. Preferably use non-comedogenic or non-acnegenic cosmetics which are oil-free and water-based products.

### How long does it take before I may notice results from using my acne medication?

Improvement can be expected after 4 to 8 weeks of treatment.

### What is the best way to treat acne?

Your doctor is the best person to consult and decide which treatments are best for you.

## ACNE DO'S AND DON'TS Do

- Wash your face twice a day with water and gentle, oil-free cleanser.
- If you wear make-up, remove them before sleep.
- Apply acne medication to manage blemishes. Make sure you understand how to apply them correctly to get maximum benefit.
- Use a water-based moisturiser to keep skin soft, smooth and hydrated if necessary.
- Shampoo regularly and keep your hair off your face if you have long hair.
- Replace cosmetic sponges and old brushes regularly to reduce bacteria.
- Drink plenty of water, eat a balanced diet and exercise regularly
- Stop smoking
- Seek the advice of your doctor if your skin condition doesn't improve.

## ACNE DO'S AND DON'TS Don't

- Do not ignore your acne as it may cause permanent scarring.
- Do not squeeze or pick your acne as this can deepen the inflammation and cause scarring.
- Do not use harsh scrubs and cleansers that may irritate or dry your skin.
- Do not expose your skin to extreme temperatures or sunlight.
- Do not use greasy oil-based cosmetics that can clog pores and trigger breakouts.

## ACNE TREATMENT

### Mild:

You may use commercial products. Otherwise only one topical agent (doctor's prescription) is necessary.

### Moderate:

A combination of 2 topical agents or if more severe, an oral antibiotic will be prescribed.

### Severe:

In the presence of nodulocystic acne or acne not responding to treatment, referral to a dermatologist is required.

**This patient information leaflet is developed to supplement the needs of patients in line with the Clinical Practice Guideline on Management of Acne which is published for medical personnel.**



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JUNE 2012