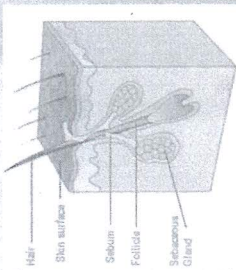


## What is acne?

Acne is a disorder resulting from the action of hormones and other substances on the skin's oil glands and hair follicles. Acne can occur on the face, neck, back, chest, and shoulders. Although not a serious health threat, acne can be a source of emotional distress. Severe acne might also lead to permanent scarring.



As shown above, the small holes, or pores, in your skin connect to glands that make an oily substance called sebum. The pores are connected to the glands by follicles, through which oil carries dead skin cells to the surface. A plug can form from the sebum, skin cells, and hair within a follicle and enable bacteria to grow.

**The basic acne lesion is simply an enlarged and plugged hair follicle.** From there, pimples, papules, nodules, and cysts can form.

## What causes acne?

The exact cause for acne is unknown, but there are several factors.

- Hormones, especially androgens, cause glands to enlarge and produce more sebum
- Genetics also play a role. If you're parents had acne, you are more likely to have it as well.
- Certain factors can aggravate acne if already present:



- Oil from makeup products
- Stress
- Changing hormone levels before periods or from birth control
- Squeezing or picking at blemishes

## Acne and Proper Skin Care

Can't seem to get rid of those pimples? Plagued with the occasional whitehead or blackhead? First off, you're not alone. Acne is the most common skin problem in the United States. Over **80%** of people ages 11 to 30 have experienced an acne breakout at some point in their lives.

### Skin Care Myths

1. Acne is caused by dirt.  
**FALSE**, acne is due to the combination of extra sebum production, dead skin cells, and bacteria below the surface in the follicle.

2. Washing your face more often will help.  
**FALSE**, washing your face more than twice a day can actually irritate your skin and cause more oil production.

3. Chocolate, pizza, and soda cause acne.  
**FALSE**, there is no direct evidence that diet is associated with acne. A healthy, well balanced diet, however, is wise in any regard.



4. The sun will help get rid of acne.  
**FALSE**, over exposure to the sun causes skin damage, which leaves the skin irritated. This irritation can result in more acne in the following weeks as the skin heals itself.

## Proper Skin Care

1. **Wash your face correctly twice a day**
  - Begin by washing your hands to avoid transmitting the dirt and germs on your hands to your face.
  - Next, use warm (not hot) water to splash water on your face with your hands.
  - Then using a skin cleanser appropriate for your skin type, wash your face in gentle circular motions. Avoid scrubbing.

Appropriate skin cleansers:

- Sensitive Skin:
  - Gentle, fragrance free
- Oily or Acne prone:
  - cleansers containing salicylic acid or benzoyl peroxide



- Rinse your face using cool water.
- Pat your face dry with a soft towel. Avoid rubbing or using a rough towel so as to minimize irritation.

### 2. Do not pop pimples.

As tempting as it may be, popping pimples only spreads the bacteria further. Popping blemishes can also lead to scarring.

### 3. Moisturize regularly

Moisturizers hydrate the skin and prevent dry skin and irritation. For those with oily complexions, choose a light moisturizer and apply it once a day.

### 4. Use sunscreen

The sun's rays damage skin cells, irritating acne and increasing your risk for skin cancer.



### 5. Eat well, drink water, exercise and get plenty of sleep.

Just like the rest of your body, your skin will look its best when you eat a balanced diet, drink plenty of water and keep active. There is also some truth to the practice of getting one's beauty sleep!