

dermatologic conditions, acne lesions resolve slowly, and improvement may not be apparent for at least 6 weeks. Individual comedones can take several weeks to months to resolve, and papules and pustules usually resolve in about 1 week. The multifactorial causes of acne require a combined approach for successful treatment. Treatment consists of general measures of care and specific treatments determined by the type of lesions involved.

General measures.

The practitioner provides the adolescent with an overall explanation of the disease process, emphasizing the patient's involvement. Improvement of the adolescent's overall health status is part of the general management. Adequate rest, moderate exercise, a well-balanced diet, reduction of emotional stress, and elimination of any foci of infection are all part of general health promotion.

Cleansing.

Acne is not caused by dirt or oil on the surface of the skin. Gentle cleansing with a mild cleanser once or twice daily is usually sufficient. Antibacterial soaps are ineffective and may be drying when used in combination with topical acne medications. For some adolescents, hygiene of the hair and scalp appears to be related to the clinical activity of acne. Acne on the forehead may improve with brushing the hair away from the forehead and more frequent shampooing.

Medications.

Treatment success depends on commitment from the adolescent. Before prescribing treatment, the practitioner should determine the adolescent's level of comfort and readiness to begin treatment. The adolescent should be reminded that clinical improvement may take weeks to months. Early intervention, most often with topical medications, may prevent the development of more severe acne.

Tretinoin (Retin-A) is the only drug that effectively interrupts the abnormal follicular keratinization that produces microcomedones, the invisible precursors of the visible comedones. Tretinoin alone is usually sufficient for management of comedonal acne ([Kim and Armstrong, 2011](#)). Tretinoin is available as a cream,