



ACNE: TIPS FOR MANAGING

6 skin care habits that can clear acne

If you're treating your acne but still seeing breakouts, it can be frustrating. Acne has many causes, and treatment looks different for everyone. Fortunately, there are some self-care steps you can take at home to help manage your acne during treatment.

6 at-home acne tips from dermatologists



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Follow these tips from the experts to care for your acne during treatment.

To get the best results from your acne treatment, board-certified dermatologists recommend these tips.

- **Keep your skin clean.** Gently wash your face up to twice daily and after sweating. Choose a gentle, non-abrasive cleanser. Apply it with your fingertips, as scrubbing with washcloths, sponges, and other tools can irritate your skin.
- **Choose the right skin care.** Use gentle skin care products and ones that say “alcohol-free” on the label. Avoid products that can irritate your skin, including astringents, toners, and exfoliants. These products can dry your skin and make acne appear worse.

- **Shampoo regularly.** The oil from your hair can cause acne on your forehead. If you have oily hair, shampoo more often than you do now and keep your hair away from your face.
- **Stick to your treatment.** Trying new acne treatments too often can irritate your skin and cause breakouts. Give your treatment time to work. It may take several weeks to few months before you see a difference.
- **Keep your hands off.** Touching your face throughout the day can cause acne to flare. While it can be tempting to pick, pop, or squeeze your acne, doing so will make the acne take longer to clear and increase your risk for scarring and dark spots called post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation.
- **Stay out of the sun and tanning beds.** Along with increasing your risk for skin cancer, tanning damages your skin and can worsen acne. Some acne medications can also make your skin very sensitive to damaging ultraviolet rays from the sun and tanning beds.

Protect your skin by avoiding tanning — indoors and out — and by seeking shade, wearing sun-protective clothing, and applying a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher to all skin not covered by clothing when outdoors. Look for a sunscreen that says “non-comedogenic” or “won’t clog pores.” For more effective protection, select clothing with an ultraviolet protection factor (or UPF) number on the label.

Acne takes time to clear. If you keep seeing breakouts after following these tips, partner with a board-certified dermatologist. Dermatologists can treat existing acne, prevent new breakouts from forming, and reduce your chance of developing scars.

Related AAD resources

- [10 skin care habits that can worsen acne](#)
- [Moisturizer: Why you may need it if you have acne](#)
- [Emotional effects of acne: Acne can affect more than your skin](#)
- [Quiz: Are any acne myths preventing you from seeing clearer skin?](#)

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