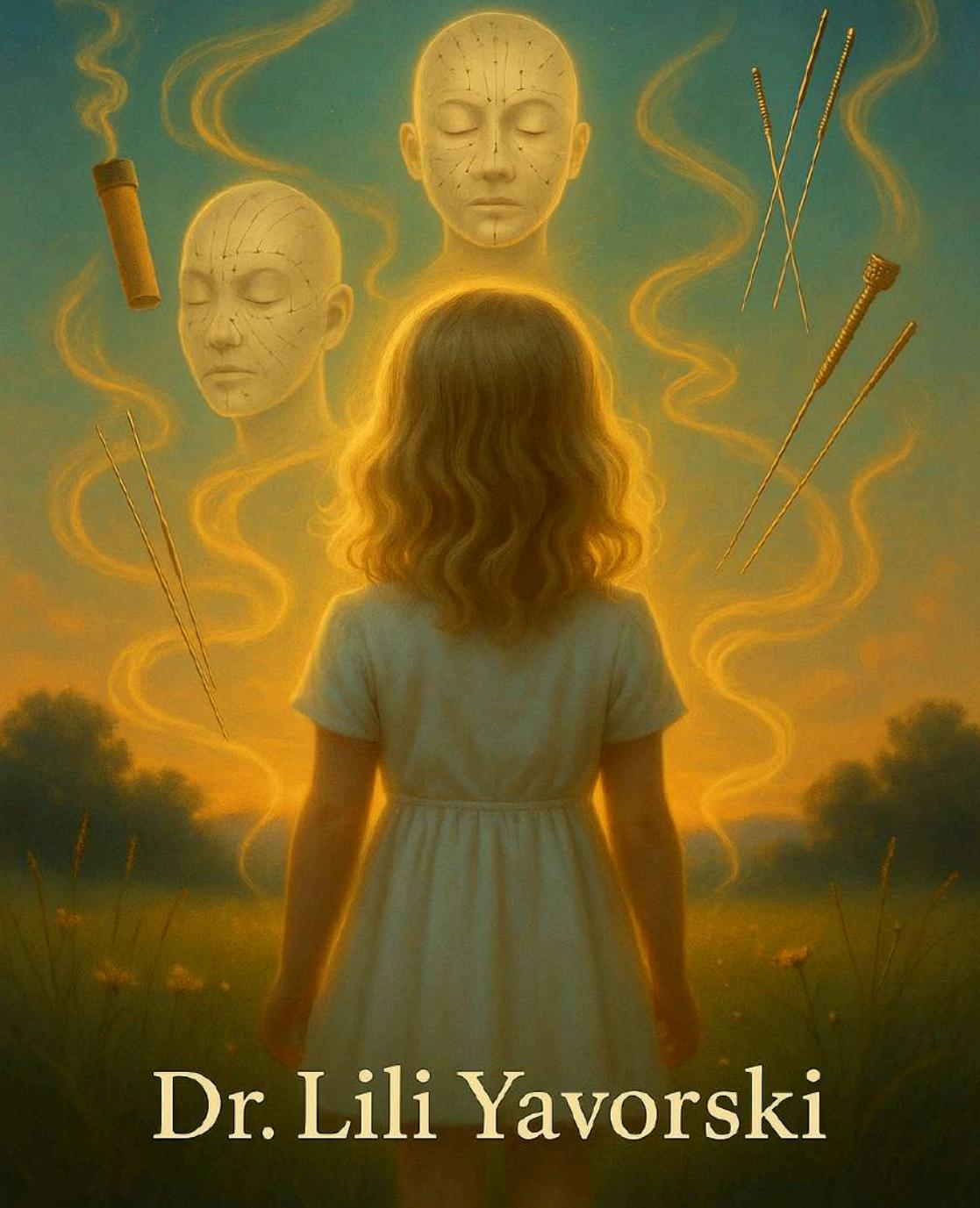


The Energetic Roots of Acne



Dr. Lili Yavorski

Why Does Acne Happen?

A Oriental Medicine (OM) Perspective

In Oriental Medicine, the skin is not just an isolated organ — it's a mirror of what's happening inside the body. Acne isn't simply about clogged pores or oil glands; it's a sign of a deeper imbalance within your internal systems.

Most acne, from a OM point of view, is caused by a combination of three major patterns:

Dampness, Internal Heat, and Stagnation of Qi and Blood.

1. Dampness

Dampness means your body is not handling fluids properly. Normally, the Spleen helps transform and move fluids through the body. But when it becomes weak — due to poor diet, overeating, or eating too much cold or raw food — fluids begin to build up and stagnate.

This dampness can collect under the skin, leading to puffiness, swelling, cyst-like bumps, and acne with white pus. Think of it like a swampy area — a place where inflammation can easily grow.

2. Internal Heat

This is a state of too much warmth or inflammation in the body. It can come from:

- Emotional stress (like anger or frustration),

- Overheating the organs with greasy, fried, spicy, or sugary food,
- Chronic tension or a fast-paced lifestyle.

This heat often builds up in the Stomach or Lung meridians and pushes toxins out through the skin. Acne becomes red, warm to the touch, inflamed, and may have yellow pus inside.

3. Qi & Blood Stagnation

Healthy skin depends on the smooth flow of energy (Qi) and blood. They nourish the tissues and help carry away toxins.

But when emotional stress, lack of movement, muscle tension (like jaw clenching or sitting all day) block that flow, stagnation occurs.

This causes deep, painful acne that doesn't go away easily — and may leave scars.

Summary:

In OM, acne is never just a skin issue. It's a sign that something deeper is out of balance.

To truly heal it, we don't just treat the skin — we need to:

- Move Qi,
- Clear internal heat,
- Dry dampness,

- And support the Spleen and other organs.
-

This mini guide shares what really works. These are basic principles you can start using on your own — and often, that's enough to begin seeing change.

But if your acne has lasted for years, or if you feel other symptoms affecting your body, it may be time to go deeper.

I offer private consultations where we look at your unique case: what's blocked, what needs support, which herbs and foods are right for you.

That's not generic advice — it's your personal healing system.

And you've already taken the first step, just by reading this guide. 

How to Use This

Here, I've gathered 6 of the most common types of acne from the perspective of Oriental Medicine.

But these aren't diagnoses.

They're clues — to help you understand
what exactly inside you is asking for attention and care.

How to find your type:

1. Read the short descriptions below — and gently ask yourself:

“Does this feel like me?”

Don’t focus only on how it looks from the outside.

Focus on how it feels inside.

You might recognize yourself in one type.

Or in several at once.

That’s completely okay.

Your body doesn’t follow fixed formulas.

It has its own rhythm, its layers, its depths.

And this guide — is an invitation to start listening to them.



Damp-Heat Acne

This is the most common type of acne in Oriental Medicine.

Here, the body accumulates a kind of sticky, greasy, hot dampness — and it pushes through the pores, forming inflamed, pus-filled breakouts.

Where does it come from?

- Food: Too much fried, spicy, greasy food, alcohol, sweets, or dairy
 - Hot & humid weather: When the outside is steamy and your body can't keep up with it
 - Stress & anger: Emotional heat acts like fuel to the fire inside
 - Weak Spleen: Can't manage fluid metabolism, so dampness builds up like a swamp
-

What's happening inside?

- ◆ Spleen — In OM, it's not just a lymph organ. It manages digestion and fluid balance.

When it's weak, food doesn't get transformed into clean energy.

Dampness stays behind. The body starts to feel like a wet, moldy basement.

- ◆ Liver — If you hold in your frustration, feel irritated or perfectionistic, your Liver overheats.

That inner heat rises to the face, causing red, inflamed acne with pus.

Think of it like a pressure cooker no one is turning off.

- ◆ Stomach & Intestines — Often too hot as well.

Signs like constipation, bloating, bitter taste in the mouth, or thick coating on the tongue show the system is overloaded with toxins it's trying to release.

🌀 What's going on emotionally?

This acne type shows up in people who hold in a lot.

Unspoken anger. Frustration — at the world, at yourself.

Striving to keep everything under control... until the body says: Enough.

So it pushes it all outward — through the skin.

🔍 What does it look like?

- Oily, shiny skin
- Large red pimples with pus
- Often painful to touch
- May come with body odor or bad breath
- Heaviness in the belly, sticky stools

- Tongue has a thick yellow coating
-



What helps?

1. Cool the internal heat — not by force, but by direction:

- Remove from your diet: fried food, dairy, sweets, alcohol, smoked meats
- Avoid: bananas, peanuts, raw salads, cold smoothies (at least for now)
- Keep meals simple: steamed vegetables, grains, soft cooked fruits, some greens

2. Use natural foods that drain heat & dampness:

- Steamed white radish, bitter melon, green beans
- Green buckwheat, barley, cooked amaranth
- Corn silk tea or mint tea (but not cold!)

3. Begin your detox gently in the morning:

- A glass of warm water with 2–3 cucumber slices or fresh mint leaves
- Breakfast: millet porridge, green mung beans, or plain rice — no oil
- Eat before 9:00 AM — this helps the body clear out “yesterday’s” heat

4. Support elimination through movement & sweat:

- 15 minutes of slow walking after meals
 - Gentle face massage or dry body brushing
 - Let the body sweat naturally — but avoid overheating
(The sweat should be soft, not forced.)
-



What about raw salads & smoothies?

You can have them — but with care:

- ◆ No ice
- ◆ Only in warm weather
- ◆ Only when your digestion is clear (not foggy or bloated)

They can help cool heat a little — but if overdone, they'll create more dampness.

This acne type responds well to food therapy.

Even 5–15 days of mindful eating often brings visible results.



Blood Heat Acne

These are “hot” pimples that live deep under the skin and often leave marks or scars behind.

In Oriental Medicine, this means your blood has overheated — quite literally.

When your body can’t handle stress, emotional overload, toxic environments, or constant overeating, the blood begins to heat up.

It stores this heat and the toxins that come with it — and eventually tries to push them out... through the skin.

In OM, blood is not just a liquid. It nourishes your skin, hair, body, and even your mental clarity.

When it overheats — the whole system inflames.

What causes it?

- Emotions: anger, inner pressure, suppressed feelings, perfectionism
- Food: alcohol, red meat, smoked or fried foods
- Late dinners, especially heavy or fatty meals
- Hormonal changes: ovulation, PMS, menopause

- Inherited “hot” constitution — people who always feel warm, blush easily, or sweat a lot
-

 **Emotions matter — deeply.**

This type of acne is often seen in people who are emotionally burned out — holding on to too much inside with no outlet.

These are the perfectionists. The high performers. The ones who don’t allow themselves weakness.

They hold everything together — until their skin can’t hold it anymore.

 **How it looks:**

- Deep, painful pimples, often on the cheeks, under the cheekbones, back or chest
 - Dark spots or scars remain after breakouts
 - Red, hot, inflamed skin
 - Mouth ulcers, cold sores, nosebleeds
 - Bright red, dry tongue
 - Intense thirst, heat in the body, irritability
-

Common mistakes:

- Drinking raw vegetable juices by the liter — they may seem “healthy” but they overheat the blood even more
 - Chocolate, red wine, and nuts — they feed the internal fire
 - Saunas, sunbathing, hot baths — your body’s already overheated
 - Too much sweet food — especially honey, baked goods, dates
 - Fasting — sounds detoxifying, but it actually increases internal heat
-

What helps:

- Foods that cool the blood: cucumber, celery, beetroot, chrysanthemum, lotus
- Herbs that clear toxic heat: dandelion root, mint, dried tangerine peel
- More water, movement, and deep sleep
- Avoid emotional overheating — mental fire is often worse than spicy food
- Simple inner cooling: boiled beetroot, cucumber water, celery, lotus or chrysanthemum tea
- Herbal allies: mint, dandelion, tangerine peel, green tea (in moderation)

- Don't eat late — especially heavy or fatty meals
- Get moving — so your blood doesn't stagnate
- Sleep well — rest is the best blood cleanser
- And most of all: don't let stress spin you out

Emotional fire is real — and it burns from within

This type of acne often has emotional roots.

It's not just surface inflammation — it's inflammation in the blood itself.

That's why the treatment needs to be gentle, cooling, and respectful.

Don't fight your body — cool the fire.

Bring back a sense of inner shade, calm, and space.

Healing isn't about suppressing symptoms — it's about softening the fire at its source.





Hormonal Acne: Qi & Blood Stagnation

(When the body stays silent too long... and starts to speak through the skin.)

This type of acne is familiar to many women — especially those who bottle everything up, live under pressure, move too little, and experience irregular menstrual cycles.

In Oriental Medicine, the Liver is responsible for the smooth flow of Qi and Blood.

It's also deeply connected to emotions, menstruation, and the skin.

Hormonal acne linked to Qi and Blood stagnation often shows up as:

- Deep, painful pimples
 - Mostly on the chin, jawline, neck
 - That don't always come to the surface, but sit as firm internal nodules
 - They heal slowly and may leave marks
-



What causes it?

- Ongoing stress, inner tension, emotional suppression
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Menstrual irregularities, PMS
- Long-term use of hormonal contraceptives

- Repressed emotions, perfectionism
-

Signs it might be your type:

- Pimples are deep, painful, and have no white head
 - Mostly on the lower part of the face — chin, jaw, neck, sometimes temples
 - Worse before your period
 - Periods may be painful or irregular
 - PMS symptoms: breast tenderness, mood swings, headaches
 - Tongue may appear purple or have spots
 - Pulse feels tight or wiry to the touch
-

Common mistakes:

- Constantly “holding yourself together” without expressing emotions
- Eating greasy, smoked, or cold foods straight from the fridge
- Relying on detox teas without changing lifestyle — won’t help

What helps:

1. Support your body through gentle warmth and movement:

- Acupressure or acupuncture
 - Warm compress on the lower abdomen (especially before your period)
 - Herbs (under guidance): dried tangerine peel, angelica root, milk thistle
-

Food therapy for hormonal acne (Qi + Blood stagnation):

A. Add more warmth and flow:

- Buckwheat, red lentils, black sesame, beetroot, carrot, pumpkin
- A sweet-sour stew: apple + beetroot + plums (lightly cooked)
- Spices like turmeric, ginger, cinnamon, cardamom — warm but not harsh
- A little fermented food (kimchi, sauerkraut) — but not cold!

 These foods move Qi, nourish Blood, and help release stagnation

B. Avoid what's heavy and stagnant:

- Rich dairy, cheese, chocolate, yeast bread
- Raw salads in cold weather
- Too many sweets — they block the Liver and slow blood movement

 Avoid “stress-snacking” — the emotions you eat with become part of your meal

C. Support digestion rhythm:

- Eat calmly, not while moving or stressed
 - Don’t overeat — better 5 small, gentle meals than 2 large ones
 - Sip warm water between meals — it helps Qi flow
-

D. Add “tiny allies” that move the blood (just a pinch daily):

- Turmeric + mustard seeds — warm the lower body
 - Lotus seeds (cooked) — calm emotional overload
 - Tangerine peel (Chen Pi) — moves Qi and clears the Stomach
-

 This isn’t a diet — it’s a flow support system.

This type of acne doesn't respond to creams.

It heals through movement — physical, emotional, and internal.

And most importantly:

You don't have to be strong all the time.

Your skin is not your enemy.

It's simply saying out loud what your body has been holding in silence.





Spleen Deficiency + Damp:

Soft, pale acne. Tired skin. A tired body.

This type of acne doesn't scream — but it lingers.

The skin looks pale and moist, often with small white pimples. And underneath that... there's fatigue. Heaviness after meals. Mental fog. A quiet kind of exhaustion.

In Oriental Medicine, the Spleen is not just an organ. It's the core of digestion and energy.

Its job is to "cook" food into strength, warmth, and clean fluid.

But when the Spleen is weak, fluids don't get transformed. They stagnate, the skin doesn't renew, and instead of radiance — you get dullness. Instead of energy — tiredness.



What causes it?

- Too much cold food: smoothies, salads, raw fruit, yogurt
 - Overeating — or long gaps between meals
 - Sedentary lifestyle
 - Poor sleep, especially when your mind stays active at night
 - Emotional burnout: "I never have time to recover"
-

How it shows up:

- Small pimples, often white or filled with fluid
 - Skin is soft, damp, low in tone
 - Heaviness after meals, daytime sleepiness
 - General paleness, puffiness (under the eyes or in the belly)
 - Tongue has white coating, often with teeth marks along the sides
-

Common mistakes:

- Eating “healthy” with lots of raw fruit and salads — the Spleen can’t extract energy from them
 - Skipping breakfast, or long fasting — weakens the body even more
 - Sleeping during the day instead of moving — dampness builds up
 - Doing “juice detoxes” — not cleansing, but draining
-

What helps:

1. Switch to warm, cooked food:

- Pumpkin, sweet potato, rice, millet, buckwheat, gently cooked vegetables
 - Light soups, porridge — small portions, eaten regularly
 - Add warming spices: a pinch of ginger, turmeric, cumin to each dish
-

2. Begin your day with stability:

- Warm water with ginger slices or a red date
 - Don't skip breakfast — even something simple: a boiled egg, porridge, or warm vegetables
 - Slow down in the morning — slowness helps the Spleen "wake up"
-

3. Add gentle movement:

- Morning walk, abdominal self-massage
 - Gentle stretching, deep belly breathing
 - Warm socks — your feet should always be warm
-

4. Create rhythm in your life:

- Eat at regular times
 - Make space for calm at home
 - Reduce mental clutter
 - And most importantly: don't rush your healing — your body needs time to refill
-

This is not the fast kind of acne.

And it won't heal through force — but through nourishment.

This is the kind of skin that clears when you stop pushing yourself —

and start warming yourself. With food. With rhythm. With kindness. With warmth.



Kidney Yin Deficiency Acne

Dry skin — but still breaking out.

Inner heat. A body quietly fighting itself.

This type of acne often appears in adulthood — after childbirth, during menopause, after years of dieting, or long periods of pushing through without rest.

In Oriental Medicine, the Kidneys are the deep reservoir of your vital energy.

They store Yin — the cooling, moistening, feminine essence of the body.

When Yin is depleted, the body loses its inner water.

Everything becomes dry inside, but at the same time, a hidden heat arises — and the body can't balance it.

So the skin dries out... but still shows signs of inflammation.

It may seem contradictory — how can I be dry and have acne?

But this is “empty heat” — a fire that breaks through thin, dehydrated tissues.

What causes it?

- Overwork, sleep deprivation, multitasking
- Chronic stress, adrenal exhaustion
- Hormonal shifts: postpartum, menopause
- Harsh diets, overexposure to cold or wind

 **How it looks:**

- Dry, sensitive skin with breakouts
 - Heat sensations or hot flashes
 - Cyclical acne flare-ups
 - Often with insomnia, lower back pain, ringing in the ears
 - Tongue is red, thin, and dry — with little or no coating
-

 **Common mistakes:**

- Coffee, alcohol, stimulants — they burn up what's left of Yin
 - Raw veggies, cold smoothies, ice water — they add cold and weaken digestion
 - Constant activity without rest
 - Staying up past midnight — that's when the Kidneys are meant to restore themselves
-

 **What helps:**

1. Nourishing food therapy:

- Warm, soft grains: millet, rice, barley
 - Soups with red dates, black sesame, or cooked pear
 - Steamed vegetables, gently warmed fruits — nothing cold from the fridge
-

2. Restorative herbs (

with guidance

):

- Schisandra, astragalus root, angelica (dang gui)
 - Lotus seeds, goji berries — in small amounts, without overheating
-

3. Rhythm of rest:

- Go to bed before 11:00 PM — this is when the Kidneys “reboot”
 - Reduce evening screen time, loud sounds, and overstimulation
 - Carve out quiet alone time: tea, journaling, silence, deep breathing
-

4. Yin-supporting practices:

- Gentle yoga, Taoist breathing, yin-style movement
 - Self-massage of ears and lower back with warm hands
 - Softness, warmth, and gratitude — both inside and out
-

This is not a skin problem — it's a message from deep within.

A whisper from the Kidneys, asking for rest.

This kind of acne won't heal through control — only through kindness.

It's time to stop fighting your body.

And start watering your roots.



White Pus, Shallow Pimples — “Pure Dampness” (Damp Accumulation without Heat)

What it looks like:

These are the tiny, soft, white-headed pimples — they don't hurt, but they also don't go away.

Sometimes there are just a few, sometimes a whole patch — especially on the cheeks, chin, or forehead.

The skin may look “clean” at first glance — but it's shiny and moist, as if inner dampness is leaking outward.

In OM, this has a clear meaning:

Dampness has accumulated in the body — without any significant heat.

The Spleen, which is responsible for transforming and “drying” fluids, isn't keeping up.

So the body starts pushing the dampness out... through the skin.

What this means in OM:

This is excess dampness without heat.

It's like your body has become a humid basement — warm energy can't reach the surface, and everything begins to stagnate.

To protect itself, the body releases the excess through small, soft white pimples.

Common causes:

- Habit of eating raw foods: fruit, salads, smoothies, yogurt
 - Overeating or eating on the run, without rest
 - Weak Spleen from illness, exhaustion, or chronic stress
 - Skipping breakfast or following diets that cool the body
 - Swallowing food quickly, without chewing well
-

Common mistakes:

- Drinking fruit smoothies “for skin” — they actually increase dampness
 - Cold drinks or iced detox teas
 - Harsh skincare that dries the surface but ignores the root cause
 - Irregular meals or eating dinner after 8:00 PM
-

What helps:

Morning rhythm is your best “dampness dryer”:

- A warm breakfast before 9:00 AM

- A short walk in the morning or after meals
 - Abdominal self-massage or gentle gua sha on the belly and thighs
 - Avoid lying down during the day — even light movement helps blood circulation
-

Daily therapy = warmth + slowness:

1. Food should be warm, simple, and gentle:

- Grains: rice, millet, buckwheat, quinoa
- Vegetables: pumpkin, carrot, zucchini, broccoli — steamed or lightly cooked
- Light soups with water or lean chicken broth (not oily)

→ The goal is to support the Spleen — not overload it, but gently lend a hand.

2. Warm drinks instead of snacks:

- Corn silk tea, mild ginger tea, warm peppermint infusion
 - Try barley tea or rice water — both help drain dampness
 - Even a simple cup of hot water is a daily digestive ritual
-

3. Avoid foods that “create slime” in the body:

- Cheese, yogurt, milk, bananas, bread, pastries, pistachios
- Raw vegetables and fruit in large amounts
- Cold and frozen items: smoothies, iced drinks, ice cream

📌 Even “healthy” foods can create dampness if the body is too weak to process them

4. Add a pinch of non-heating spices:

- Cumin, fennel, mild ginger, turmeric — just a little in each dish
 - Avoid chili or very spicy foods — there’s no heat to balance them, and we don’t want to create false fire
-

This type of acne is quiet.

It doesn’t hurt. It doesn’t scream.

But if ignored, it can linger for years.

Start with a warm breakfast.

Cut down on the extra fruit.

And you’ll already begin to “dry out the basement” from within.

What I don't recommend for any type of acne —

regardless of your diagnosis:

- ✖ Coffee, iced drinks, and dairy products — three habits that may seem harmless, but often feed inflammation, stagnation, or dampness in the body.
-

Why does it matter?

- ◆ Coffee depletes the Kidneys, dries the Blood, and stirs up internal heat.

At first, it gives a boost — but later leaves your body more exhausted, especially when it's trying to heal.

For many women with acne, coffee acts like fuel for anxiety and hormonal imbalance.

- ◆ Iced drinks weaken the digestive fire.

The Spleen “freezes,” food isn’t digested properly, and Dampness builds up.

Even a healthy meal loses its healing value when paired with a cold drink.

- ◆ Dairy products (yogurt, milk, cheese) often create phlegm, Dampness, and slow down intestinal function — especially when there’s Qi stagnation, hormonal issues, or white-headed pimples.
-



Can't quit right away? Try warm alternatives:

- Instead of coffee: barley coffee substitute or a warm drink made with chicory + cinnamon
 - Instead of yogurt: stewed apple with cinnamon
 - Instead of ice: warm herbal tea in your favorite cup
-

This isn't a strict diet —
it's an invitation to listen to your body,
and support it in the most gentle, nourishing way.

I don't know the exact place — physically or emotionally — you're in as you open this book.

Maybe you're tired of battling your skin.

Maybe you're just beginning to search for answers.

Or maybe you already feel that your path is no longer about fighting — but about listening.

I wrote this book to help you see the deeper connections.

Not just to identify your “type of acne,”
but to begin to understand why it appeared, what's out of balance,

and how you can support yourself — not through pressure, but through care.

You might recognize familiar symptoms in these pages.

Or you might discover an entirely new language of the body — one that has always been there, just speaking too softly to hear.

In either case, I hope this book becomes a source of grounding for you —

calm, thoughtful, and alive.

With love and respect,

Dr. Lili Yavorski

Copyright © 2025 Dr. Lili Yavorski. All rights reserved.