

Spring 2012

MEMBER

Associated  
Skin Care  
Professionals

## Break Free from Acne Breakouts

### The Facts for a Clear Complexion

Cathy Ulrich

A scourge of teenagers and adults alike, acne is one of the least understood of all skin conditions--and one of the most common. Usually associated with youth, acne can last well into the adult years and sometimes throughout life. It's tough to treat, especially if approached as a dirty skin problem. And if not cared for properly, acne can produce scarring on the face and body that is difficult, if not impossible, to clear.

Let's look at some of the myths surrounding acne and replace them with the facts.

**MYTH: ANY SKIN CONDITION THAT CAUSES PIMPLES, BLACKHEADS, AND REDNESS IS A FORM OF ACNE.**

pillowcases washed in harsh chemicals. It, too, can cause whiteheads, tiny pimples, and redness.

Gram negative folliculitis also looks like severe acne, producing pustules and deep cysts, but it's caused by a different kind of bacteria than common acne. This is a severe skin infection requiring medical treatment. It's usually the result of long-term tetracycline or topical antibiotic use, which sets up an environment for drug resistant bacteria. It can be treated with proper testing and administration of gram negative-specific antibiotics. It's important to see a dermatologist for appropriate testing and diagnosis before assuming that your skin condition is common acne.



Acne-free skin can be accomplished with the right products and treatments for your complexion.

**FACT: THERE ARE OTHER CONDITIONS THAT LOOK LIKE ACNE BUT AREN'T.**

Several other skin conditions look like acne. Rosacea is a hereditary skin condition that causes redness and can eventually develop tiny whiteheads and pimples if left untreated. Contact dermatitis can occur when the skin is exposed to harsh soaps or even sheets or

**MYTH: IF I HAVE ACNE, IT MEANS MY SKIN IS DIRTY. I SHOULD USE A STRONGER CLEANSER.**

**FACT: HARSH CLEANSERS AND EXCESSIVE WASHING CAN MAKE ACNE WORSE.**

It's true that excessive oil on the skin can clog pores, but harsh cleansers and soaps

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#### Office Hours and Contact

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will irritate the skin, making acne worse. Use a mild cleanser that doesn't dry your skin. Wash twice a day--before applying makeup in the morning and before bed. It's essential to cleanse your skin prior to going to sleep to remove makeup, dirt, and pollutants. Use a makeup that is water-based and noncomedogenic (non-clogging), and avoid cold creams or lotions that leave a greasy film. Your skin care professional is trained to evaluate your skin type and offer guidance about proper daily skin care and products. Consult your esthetician about the skin care and makeup that's right for you.

**MYTH: EATING CHOCOLATE AND FRIED FOODS MAKES ME BREAK OUT.**

**FACT: A HEALTHY DIET GREATLY CONTRIBUTES TO HEALTHY SKIN, BUT EATING FOODS, SUCH AS CHOCOLATE, DOESN'T BY ITSELF CAUSE ACNE BREAKOUTS.**

Research has never been able to prove that eating specific foods--even fried foods--causes acne. However, certain foods may aggravate it. On the other hand, eating a healthy diet contributes to better skin, especially foods rich in beta-carotene, such as spinach, apricots, peaches, sweet potatoes, and carrots. These provide the raw materials for the body to produce vitamin A, which is essential for cell growth and skin health. Citrus, tomatoes, and berries contain vitamin C, a powerful antioxidant that strengthens the immune system and helps the body fight bacteria that can cause acne. A healthy diet provides the building blocks for healthier skin, but eating chocolate or sweets occasionally won't cause acne flare-ups.

**MYTH: SUNBATHING CLEARS ACNE.**

**FACT: WHILE LIMITED EXPOSURE TO UV RAYS FROM THE SUN MAY HELP CLEAR EXISTING PIMPLES, EXTENDED EXPOSURE CAN MAKE ACNE WORSE.**

Extended sun exposure can damage skin, causing peeling and flaking, which translates into blocked pores--a primary cause of acne. In addition, sunbathing dries skin, which stimulates oil production. This excess oil combines with extra dead skin cells from sun damage, setting up the perfect environment for blocked pores and breakouts. Ask your esthetician about

oil-free sunscreen products for your specific skin type and use them daily. You'll not only help reduce acne, you'll prevent skin damage that causes wrinkles as well.

**MYTH: I'LL GROW OUT OF IT.**

**FACT: HALF OF ALL ADULT WOMEN AND ONE-FOURTH OF ALL ADULT MEN HAVE SOME DEGREE OF ACNE SYMPTOMS.**

While it's more common in teenagers, acne is prevalent in adults as well. Some people make it through their teenage years only to develop acne later in life. The hormone changes experienced during pregnancy can cause adult-onset acne, but other conditions--the use of certain medications, exposure to chemicals, and other hormonal changes experienced in adulthood--can also produce acne symptoms long after adolescence.

**MYTH: I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO UNDERSTANDS MY COMPLICATED SKIN.**

**FACT: YOUR ESTHETICIAN CAN HELP.**

Your esthetician may recommend you see a dermatologist to help correctly diagnose and treat your skin condition, and she can certainly help direct you in the best ways to help support a healthy complexion. By guiding you to the right skin care products and makeup and teaching you how to use them, your skin care professional can be an important part of your team. Monthly facials specifically designed to gently cleanse and exfoliate your skin will also aid in healing and prevention.

Acne requires special attention in your daily skin care regimen and lifestyle. Let your esthetician support you in this journey to health through regular treatments and sound education.



**Ask your esthetician about proper face washing techniques--a key component in treating acne.**

# A Peek Into Peels

Chemical peels have become increasingly popular over the past few years. Once a strictly medical procedure, peels entered the beauty industry in the 1980s as a way to rejuvenate aging skin, smooth lines, even out skin tone, fade dark spots, minimize enlarged pores, improve acne, and generally promote healthier skin.

Technically speaking, the peels offered in spas and salons across the country aren't really peels, but are a kind of resurfacing that many refer to as chemical exfoliation. Deeper peels are considered medical procedures because of how deeply they penetrate skin and are done by medical care providers. These peels use much more potent chemicals and are substantially more expensive, costing several hundred dollars.

Chemical exfoliation, a treatment you can receive from your esthetician, involves applying one or more acids to facial skin to remove the outermost layer. In general, chemical exfoliation

involves the use of alpha hydroxy acids, which are naturally found in foods. The most common are glycolic acid that is derived from sugar cane, and lactic acid from sour milk. These acids have a long track record of treating dry skin and hyperpigmentation, and of reversing the effects of aging. Another frequently used substance is salicylic acid. Derived from the bark of the willow tree, it is an oil-grabber that helps unclog pores.

After a chemical exfoliation, you must take good care of your skin or risk developing dark patches. Skin will be especially sensitive to sunburn for about a week after the peel, so sunscreen is a must, even on cloudy days. Other potential side effects include flaking or scabbing.

Not everyone is a good candidate for chemical exfoliation. Dark-skinned and olive-toned individuals are at greater risk for scarring. Some medications and medical conditions, like pregnancy or autoimmune disorders, may preclude you from this treatment.



**Chemical peels help to promote healthier skin.**

## The Scoop on Sugar

### Not Such a Sweet Story

*Shelley Burns, N.D.*

Most people have no idea just how much sugar is in the foods Americans consume. However, this sweet culprit may be behind many health issues, including skin problems. Here's why.

When refined carbohydrates, otherwise known as simple sugars, are consumed in excess, they cause an increase in blood sugar levels. This excess sugar (glucose) attaches itself to proteins and is referred to as glycosylation. All cells in our bodies have a protein component to them including our hormones, enzymes, cholesterol, and immune cells. As proteins become coated with glucose, they are unable to work effectively.

Collagen, that vital component of a glowing complexion, makes up 40

percent of the proteins in the body. Glycosylation hastens protein cross-linking, which weakens collagen. The result: wrinkles.

But wait, there's more. Sugar also causes an increase in levels of cortisol, the stress hormone, which can interfere with hormonal balance and increase inflammation. Skin inflammation can manifest as acne, puffiness under the eyes, and eczema. Sugar also increases insulin levels and reduces sensitivity of insulin. In fact, research shows people with acne process sugar poorly, which could be a direct result of high cortisol and high insulin levels in the blood.

And finally, sugar depletes the necessary nutrients required to keep the immune

system healthy. For example, sugar interferes with the way the body uses vitamin C, which is needed for the formation of collagen and elastin as well as immunity. It can also lead to sluggish digestion, which also affects the skin.

The best way to steer clear of sugar is to read labels. Avoid products that list sugar in the first three ingredients, and be aware of words ending in "ose" such as sucrose, dextrose, and maltose, all of which are sugar indicators. Also avoid processed foods and refined carbohydrates, such as white flour, white rice, and white potatoes.

Whenever the sweet allure of sugar tempts you, remember, sugar-free is key to beauty.

Welcome to the first edition of the Radiant Skin Therapy Newsletter! I have included articles that are beneficial to promoting your healthiest skin. Remember to share the information included with those you care about as well. I look forward to working with you on your skin care regimen to give you that radiance we all want that reflects health!

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