

## 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.**

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.

*In quiet and  
silence, the  
truth is made  
clear.....*

-Unknown



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 pillowcases washed in harsh chemicals.

**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 will irritate the skin, making acne worse. Use a mild cleanser that doesn't dry your

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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.

# The Wonders of Water

## For Skin Health and More

*Shelley Burns, N.D.*

Creams, nutritional supplements, treatments, lotions, and potions. We are always looking for the next miracle product to keep skin looking healthy and young. However, there is one essential, inexpensive, and often overlooked nutrient right at your fingertips: water.

Just as a car cannot function without oil, our bodies cannot function without water. After oxygen, H<sub>2</sub>O is the most important component of the body, responsible for 65-70 percent of its composition. And of this, 80 percent is dedicated to the skin.

Water is the medium for various enzymatic and chemical reactions in the body. It moves nutrients, hormones, antibodies, and oxygen through the blood and lymphatic systems, and it also helps form the matrix of the skin. Devoid of water, the skin becomes dehydrated, resulting in a dry, dull tone.

It's likely that the moment a person feels thirsty, mild dehydration has already set

in. To keep the complexion looking smooth and blemish-free, drink water upon waking and continue drinking it throughout the day at one- to two-hour intervals. At least six 8-oz. glasses of water should be consumed daily and more if you are exercising, perspiring, and/or in hot weather. Ideally, intake should be between ten and twelve 8-oz. glasses of water a day. One note: Don't increase water intake all at once, as the kidneys and digestive system need time to adjust. Add one 8-oz. glass every day or every second day.

What counts toward your daily water intake? Just the basics: water and herbal tea. Caffeinated beverages and alcoholic drinks are diuretics that can contribute to dehydration, requiring even more hydration after drinking.

Not only is water important for skin health, it can also play a key role in the prevention of disease. Drinking eight glasses of water a day can decrease the risk of colon cancer, bladder cancer, and potentially even breast cancer.



**Water helps keep the body at optimum health.**

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# The Scoop on Meditation

## A Simple Practice with Profound Benefits

People who meditate regularly appear internally and externally five to 10 years younger than their non-meditating peers, according to author Deepak Chopra. That's good news for the estimated 10 million people who practice meditation on an ongoing basis and experience the resulting calm it cultivates.

The rich benefits come from doing something that looks like nothing: Sitting still, being quiet, and breathing deeply. Meditation works simply but profoundly by defusing the onslaughts of life -- a racing mind, busyness, deadlines, commutes, all of which have physiological effects on well-being. Meditation calms the nervous system, decreases metabolic rate, heart rate, and

blood pressure, and lowers levels of cholesterol, stress hormones, and free radicals. It also has a direct effect on breathing, slowing and deepening respiration so more oxygen circulates throughout the body. Not only that, meditation is said to lessen feelings of anxiety and depression and improve memory and concentration. And all of this culminates in slowing the aging process, as Chopra notes.

There are many meditation techniques, including focusing on a mantra, a sacred word or phrase, or your breath. But the basic intent of all meditation is focus and attention. And it doesn't take hours a day in an ashram to meditate effectively. Benefits kick in with even a short period of devoted time.

How to begin? Wear comfortable, unrestrictive clothes, sit on a cushion or chair with your back straight (think once again, comfort), rest your hands on your legs, let your eyes go soft and out of focus or close them, breathe slowly and deeply, and -- the hardest part -- attempt to empty your mind of thoughts and quiet the internal dialogue. When thoughts flit through your mind, let them pass without judging them and come back to your focus (your mantra, counting, etc.) and breathing.

Start with this sitting meditation technique for five minutes a day, and add on time as you get more at ease with the process. For more information on techniques and benefits, check out [www.abc-of-meditation.com](http://www.abc-of-meditation.com).

*Forget not that  
the earth  
delights to feel  
your bare feet  
and the winds  
long to play with  
your hair.*

- Kahlil Gibran

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