

## SKIN SERIOUSLY.

### Condition: Acne Treatments

Acne treatments take a long time to work. Many of them cause a worsening of acne anywhere from 2 to 8 weeks after starting because they are forcing the acne which was under your skin to the surface. This is part of the clearing process. It can be frustrating, but things will get better. It can take a full two to three months to see a big improvement in acne.

Most acne medicines which are applied to the face can be drying. For this reason it is good to stop all over the counter acne washes and treatments when you begin on prescription medicines. If the doctor has not prescribed you a acne wash, you should use gentle washes such as Dove, Cetaphil, Cerve, Purpose, or Aquanil to cleanse your face twice daily. Allow your face to dry thoroughly before applying medications. This can reduce potential stinging and burning.

If you are using a retinoid medicine (Retin A, Differin, Tazorac, tretin X, tretinoin, Ziana, Epiduo, Atralin) you want to apply only a pea sized amount to your whole face. More is not better, it will only cause irritation. When you begin these medicines, you should apply them only every other day or every third day (depending on how sensitive your skin is) and increase how often you apply them as your skin gets used to them. For Tazorac you may apply the medicine for 15 minutes to a half an hour then wash it off. The other retinoid medicines should not be used in this way.

Benzoyl peroxide (Brevoxyl creamy wash, Duac, Benzaclin, Benziq, Neobenz micro, Zoderm, Triaz, Epiduo, Acanya) can also be drying. Also with these medicines you will apply them to your entire face. It can also bleach clothing. If you apply your medicine at night and use white sheets and pillow cases and sleep in white nightclothes or ones you don't mind getting bleached you should be fine. Make sure the towel you use after washing the medicine off in the morning is either white or old because that may become bleached as well.

Sulfur and Sulfa (Clarifoam, Ovace, Plexion, Clenia, Sumaxin, Aczone, Klaron, Re10 Seb Prev, Rosanil, Rosula, Rosaderm, Rosac, Prascion) are more gentle than the retinoids or benzoyl peroxide but do not work as quickly. Side effects include dryness or allergic reaction. If you see redness, itching, or worsening of acne within the first week stop the medicines and call our office. Many of these medicines may be used as a mask (Clarifoam & Plexion SCT) Leave on your entire face for 15 to 30 min and wash off.

Adrienne Rencic, MD, PhD  
Crossroads Center  
1102 Baltimore Pike  
Suite 202  
Glen Mills, PA 19342  
Phone : 610.558.1446  
Fax : 610.558.1449

Hours:  
Monday:  
12:00 pm - 7:00 pm  
Tuesday - Friday:  
8:00 am - 5:00 pm

## SKIN SERIOUSLY.

This decreases dryness, and can help to eliminate the unpleasant smell of sulfur. Some of these products may also stain pillow cases yellow.

Azelic acid (Azelex 20% Cream, Finacea 15% gel) is both anti-bacterial and fights against the abnormal keratinization process. It has the added benefit of causing some lightening in post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation caused by acne. You may experience tingling the first week you use Finacea and this usually goes away after that time. These products may be used once or twice per day. With Finacea it has been shown to be equally effective using it either once or twice a day. It is also less drying this way. Finacea also may cause worsening of acne before you see an improvement.

Spironolactone is a water pill (diuretic) that is used to treat acne because it blocks male hormones. It is an alternative hormonal treatment to birth control pills. Side effects include headaches, dizziness bleeding between periods or excessive bleeding. It should not be taken if trying to get pregnant or are pregnant because it can cause malformation of genitals in male babies. Birth control should be used when on spironolactone. Birth Control pills that help acne include Yaz, Yasmin (Oggestrel), Ortho Tri-Cyclin, and Ortho Tri-Cyclen Lo Progesterone. These can be combines with spironolactone. There are not effective for birth control until they have been used for 1 month. These have risks of blood clots, particularly in women who smoke. Weight gain, headaches, and mood changes are also common side effects. Birth Control pills do not protect against sexually transmitted diseases. You should always use a condom in addition to protect from STD and HIV, and also continue yearly check ups with your OBGYN.

Oral antibiotics for acne should be taken with food to minimize upset stomach. Do not take oral antibiotics on an empty stomach and go to bed some of them (doxycycline) can cause severe heartburn if you do this. If you develop headaches joint pains, or rashes from antibiotics given for your acne, stop them immediately and call your doctor.

Many acne medicines come in a generic form. In most cases these are fine to use. In people who are sensitive and easily irritated, it is often better to use a name brand acne medicine since these are designed with moisturizers to be less irritating.

If you are dry due to acne medicines, you may use an oil free moisturizer such as Olay UV complete, Aveeno skin brightening moisturizer, Aveeno ultracalming mositurizer, Neutrogena Healthy Defense, Cetaphil facial moisturizer (they also have a facial moisturizer with an SPF of 50 for

Adrienne Rencic, MD, PhD  
Crossroads Center  
1102 Baltimore Pike  
Suite 202  
Glen Mills, PA 19342  
Phone : 610.558.1446  
Fax : 610.558.1449

Hours:  
Monday:  
12:00 pm - 7:00 pm  
Tuesday - Friday:  
8:00 am - 5:00 pm

## SKIN SERIOUSLY.

sensitive skin), DML facial moisturizer, plain Cetaphil lotion, DML lotion or Cerave lotion. For people with extremely greasy skin despite the prescription acne treatments, the following might be helpful:

- Cetaphil daily cleanser for normal to oily skin or Zest soap
- Salicylic acid: Neutrogena, Eucerin Acne washes, SalAc Wash, Aveeno Clear complexion cleansing bar
- Oil Control: Clinac OC, Mineral Makeup

Post inflammatory hyperpigmentation (PIH) is skin discoloration where the pimple existed, not an acne scar. For those with pale skin tones, the color may be pink, red or purple in color. Patients with darker skin tones may notice brown or black spots where acne once was. PPIH can fade without treatment. Unfortunately, the darker the PIH, the longer it may take to resolve. Very dark PIH may require a prescription bleaching cream like TriLuma, Lustra, Hydroquinone, or EpiQuin Micro. For non-prescription items try using a 2% hydroquinone cream such as Esoterica or Palmers Skin Success. Always wear a broad spectrum sunscreen (UVA and UVB protection) with an SPF 30 to prevent further darkening of the spots.

### Tips about Acne Treatment:

- Blackheads frequently need some form of topical retinoid
- Cysts respond best to the pill therapy
- Young children, nursing or pregnant women cannot use tetracycline based medicines
- Regular use of medicines results in better outcome
- Do not pick, it can lead to scar formation
- It takes at least 6-8 weeks for any new treatment to take effect
- Rough scrubbing with washcloths or exfoliating cleansers or cloths can cause flares
- Keep hair off the forehead and hands off the face
- Avoid use of greasy skin care products like cocoa butter; they will flare your acne

Adrienne Rencic, MD, PhD  
Crossroads Center  
1102 Baltimore Pike  
Suite 202  
Glen Mills, PA 19342  
Phone : 610.558.1446  
Fax : 610.558.1449

Hours:  
Monday:  
12:00 pm - 7:00 pm  
Tuesday - Friday:  
8:00 am - 5:00 pm