

What is ACNE and how to manage it?

What is acne?

Acne is inflammation of sebaceous glands of the skin. The sebaceous glands have a mouth that get blocked and then inflammation leads to the red bumps, blackheads, whiteheads followed by the yellow heads and even the deep tender cysts.

It is a common disorder of adolescence. It appears commonly on the face but can extend onto the neck, arms, chest and back.

What is the reason of acne?

Increase in the amount of hormones during puberty in both males and females is usually related with acne. Some people are more sensitive to the change of hormones, and they have severe acne.

Most affected ages of acne

Most young people between the age of 13 to 18 get acne. Acne usually settles by the age of 20 but it can continue in severe cases.

Some words about acne treatment

Acne treatment is different for different people. Some people have to be treated aggressively and some people just need topical treatment.

1. Diet

Sugary foods are known to worsen the acne but there is no scientific evidence. However well-balanced diet is recommended.

2. Skin Cleaning

Use mild skin cleansing agent. Don't scrub the skin just gently wash it 2 to 3 times a day.

3. Skin products

Avoid oily or creamy cosmetics. Use water-based lotions. Remove make up before bedtime.

4. Removing white heads and black heads

Avoid removing the blackheads and white heads as it can make pimples worse and lead to scarring.

5. Sunlight

Sunlight is beneficial for acne but excessive exposure should be avoided. Apply sunscreen before exposing yourself to sunlight.

6. Topical treatment

Topical creams which are used include salicylic acid, azelaic acid, benzoyl peroxide and tretinoin lotion. Stop any cream which is making the skin dry and irritated.

7. Antibiotics

Long-term antibiotics like tetracyclines are of proven value as they reduce inflammation.

8. Pill

Many females who have acne and irregular periods, they will get benefit from oral contraceptive pills. Discuss with your doctor.

If you suffer from bad acne, consult your physician for expert assessment and management.

Dr Sadaf Sarwar

MBBS (King Edward Medical College),

Fellow Royal Australian College of General Practitioner (FRACGP, Australia)

Ex-Assistant Professor, The University of Lahore, Pakistan

Consultant General and Family Physician