



Acne Triggers: Lifestyle Changes to Help Clear Your Skin

Stress and Lack of Sleep

Reduce your stress – Do whatever it takes. Stress, one of the major acne triggers, is caused by the wear and tear of day-to-day living and changes that take place in your life, both good and bad. Moving is comparable to the death of a child in its ability to cause extreme stress.

Sleep seven uninterrupted hours per night on a consistent basis. Night shift jobs, broken sleep, social media and cell phone notifications, sleeping with infants or small children, late night time management, insomnia, hormonal changes in mid-life, long plane trips and crossing time zones are factors that lead to severe physical stress, making it harder to clear acne and lighten dark circles.

Laundry Products

Detergent must be FREE of perfumes and dyes – Don't wear new clothing before washing a couple of times in fragrance-free detergent (no softener sheets). Look for white bottles that say Free & Clear, Free of Perfume & Dyes, or Free & Gentle.

- **Safe bleach:** Clorox 2 for Colors Free & Clear.
- **Safe fabric softeners:** Fragrance-free liquid Downey in the white bottle and chemical-free “dryer balls”.

Change your pillow case every day or two, launder in “free & clear” products with an extra rinse cycle if possible. Purchase several pillow cases.

Avoid laundry additives, enzymes, chlorine bleach and fabric softeners, including fragrance-free dryer sheets, which leave a waxy residue that can clog pores and irritate skin. Use 25% less detergent, and wash 25% less clothes at a time. If possible, run an extra rinse cycle. Launder all new bedding and clothing before use! Anything imported, especially jeans and scarves, are sprayed with toxic fungicides, pesticides, and formaldehyde, and must be washed a few times before wearing to avoid body acne, infections, rashes and skin discoloration.

Workout wear – Should be cotton and laundered in fragrance-free detergent with no fabric softener.

Diet and Supplements Can be Acne Triggers

Avoid iodine – Dairy products (milk in coffee beverages, cheese, ice cream, sour cream, Greek yogurt), processed foods, take-out food, frozen dinners, fast food, canned food, soft drinks, salty snacks, seaweed snacks, salted sunflower seeds, salted nuts, canned, packaged and restaurant soups, ramen noodles, tomato juice, V-8, seasoned salt, iodized salt, salty condiments, high-sodium sports and energy drinks (except Vitamin Water), sushi wrapped in seaweed, Chinese food (salty sauces, MSG, soups, soy sauce), Canadian Mexican food (cheese, sour cream, refried beans and salted tortilla chips), processed meats (lunch and deli meat, hot dogs, bacon, franks, hot links, sausage) and condiments containing kelp, MSG and/or iodized salt.

Peanuts, peanut butter, peanut oil and wheat germ - Contain androgenic hormones and can cause breakouts. You can enjoy other nuts, as long as they're unsalted. Try low-sodium almond butter, cashew butter, etc.

Supplements – Can be acne triggers, especially biotin, maca root, CLA (conjugated linoleic acid), seaweed, kelp, blue green algae, spirulina, chlorella, iodine, testosterone precursors (DHEA and andro), creatine, protein drinks that contain whey, casein, kelp, and seaweed, green detox drinks and more.

Acne-safe supplements – Iodine-free multi-vitamins, zinc monomethionine or picolinate (always with meals), enteric-coated fish oil, flax seed oil, krill oil, MSM, probiotics, calcium citrate (with magnesium and vitamin D), vitamin C complex and B-complex.

- **Safe protein powders:** Sunwarrior Classic Protein and Paleo Egg White Protein.
- **Can't sleep?** Try Estrovan Nighttime®, Alteril®, valerian root and melatonin. Check with your doctor before taking supplements, especially if you have health problems or are taking prescription meds.

Skip dairy, the biggest acne trigger – Cheese, milk, ice cream, sour cream, Greek yogurt, protein powders that contain whey and/or casein and dairy-rich coffee drinks. Dairy is linked to acne, allergies, eczema, psoriasis, weight gain, digestive problems, water retention, high blood pressure, bloating, puffy eyes and many other health problems. Learn more (<http://www.notmilk.com/kradjian.html>).

- **Concerned about calcium and vitamin D?** Eat lots of dark green veggies and take supplements with calcium citrate, magnesium and vitamin D. On cereal, try ice-cold almond (no carrageenan), coconut or rice milk.



Fish and seafood – from polluted water can cause persistent skin problems, including a rash-like acne. This doesn't seem to happen in better restaurants. If your acne is treatment-resistant and rashy, try eliminating fish and seafood from your diet for a while.

Avoid seasoned salt and iodized table salt – which contains iodine and MSG. Try a blend of iodine-free sea salt, Mrs. Dash Table Blend, garlic powder, onion powder, black pepper, paprika and cayenne pepper.

Acne Treatment, Cleansing and Product Use

Get professional acne treatments – including acne facials (enzyme peels with steam), light chemical peels and tune-up peels formulated for acne, dark spots, scars, ingrown hair and razor bumps. Professional acne treatments exfoliate the skin evenly and help home care products penetrate better. Skin brighteners and other skin-smoothing “boosters” will enhance the results dramatically.

Irritated? Constantly flaking? – If so, you may be dehydrated from low water intake, gotten too much sun, over-scrubbed your skin, applied your products too thick or too often or using the wrong product(s).

Do not scrub off dead skin cells – Washcloths, spa gloves, abrasive scrubs, brushes, buffing pads, alcohol-based astringents and rubbing with a towel can cause over-exfoliation, irritation, darkening, dead skin build-up and more flaking.

Follow directions carefully – Don't overuse or under-use your home care. Ask for help if you need it.

Don't slack up on prescribed acne home care – If we help you clear your acne, don't think you're so cute that you can quit using your products. You might stay clear for a while, but skipping home care products will allow the microscopic beginnings of pimples and ingrown hairs to form deep in your pores, causing more breakouts, which will lead to new dark spots.

Get refills – or product upgrades before you run out. Stock up before you go out of town. Don't stop your regimen because you run out of one or two products.

Use sunscreen – (zinc oxide and/or titanium dioxide) and reapply often when exposed to direct sunlight, including overcast skies and when driving. Avoid direct sun and wear sunglasses. Sunscreen use helps keep dark spots, blotchy skin tone, and dark circles from getting even darker.



Drink more water – to maintain healthy skin, fight fatigue, plump up fine lines, reduce dark circles, brighten your skin tone, and keep your skin from getting dry and irritated from active products. Drink at least half your bodyweight in ounces.

Stop picking, scratching, tweezing and skin tampering – Women, get a set of acrylic nails, file them blunt, and maintain them every two weeks. Leave “stop picking” notes to yourself on mirrors, day planners, briefcases, desk drawers, rear view mirrors and in lockers. Picking pushes bumps deeper into the follicle, slows the healing process, invites secondary infection, introduces airborne bacteria, causes thickened, dark dead skin build-up and scarring, and turns tiny bumps into huge brown, black or red blemishes that take forever to heal and fade.

Tell me about changes – in your skin, health, medical history, medications, lifestyle, home address, email address and phone number.

Use ice to reduce inflammation – Rub ice cubes in a circular motion on red, inflamed pimples and hair bumps twice a day for two minutes. This really helps!

Avoid fragrance – including skin care, hair and body products, scented aftershave, aromatherapy products, perfumed detergents, soaps, lotions and fabric softeners. Sunburn, rashes, acne, dark blemishes and dark “staining” of the skin can develop, especially on sun-exposed skin.

Acne and Your Health

Severe “photo-sensitivity” – can be caused by prescription medication, which leads to skin darkening, unsightly brown patches, blotchiness, hyperpigmented acne, darkening of existing scars, and uneven skin tone on the outer cheeks, neck, eye area, forehead, temples, knuckles, chest and other areas. These meds include all hormones:

- birth control pills, Depo-Provera® shots, NuvaRing®, OrthoEvra® patch, Mirena® IUDs with hormones and hormone replacement, oral diabetic drugs (metformin), diuretics, blood pressure meds, antihistamines, antibiotics, Accutane® (isotretinoin), retinoids (Retin A®, Differin Gel® and Tazorac®) and certain anti-depressants.
- Weight gain can also cause darkening of the skin tone caused by, insulin resistance, hormone changes and sun exposure.

Some medications are acne triggers – including lithium, hormones (oral contraceptives, Provera®, DepoProvera®, PremPro®, progesterone, Lupron Depot®, Errin®, Ortho Micronor®, Mirena® IUD, Nuvaring®, OrthoEvra® patch), systemic steroids (prednisone), topical steroids (clobetasol and betamethasone), anti-rejection meds, testosterone and its



precursors (androstendione, DHEA) and anti-convulsives (Dilantin, Tegretol®). Cold and flu meds with bromide (Alka-Seltzer® and Bromo-Seltzer®) can also aggravate acne.

Medical conditions – Thyroid, liver and kidney disease, diabetes, lupus, scleroderma, sarcoidosis, RA, MS and other auto-immune diseases, hemochromatosis (storing too much iron), obesity and rapid weight gain, menopause, peri-menopause, pregnancy, PCOS, irregular periods, hormonal imbalances and changes, fibroids, anemia and smoking can cause delayed healing, acne breakouts and sun-sensitivity resulting in darkening of the entire face or outer cheeks, forehead, upper lip, neck and orbital eye area, and slow-to-heal skin lesions, including acne and dark blemishes.

Avoid recreational drugs – especially marijuana, cocaine, X and meth, which can aggravate acne, especially if you're a picker or if they keep you from getting your sleep. Alcohol consumption doesn't cause your acne to worsen unless you're too drunk to apply your home care products.

Friction

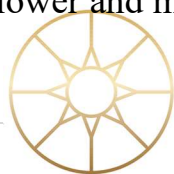
Acne mechanica – is caused by (a) friction (rubbing), (b) pressure and (c) occlusion (restricted air flow), which results in deep acne and ingrowns, scalp bumps and severe darkening.

- **Avoid pressure and friction** – like leaning on your hand or phone, sleeping on your hand or arm, wearing tight doo-rags, wave caps, sleeping scarves, hats, caps, visors, headbands (and moving them up and down on the forehead).
- **More trouble** – Poor-fitting glasses, football helmets, tight bra straps and bands, leaning and putting more pressure on one side of your butt as you sit, heavy shoulder bags and backpacks, clothing with chemical additives, over-scrubbing and rubbing with a towel.
- **Don't lean on your phone!** Use a Bluetooth® device, headset, speakerphone or ear bud.

Comedogenic Ingredients are Acne Triggers

Pore-clogging chemicals – Avoid acne aggravating products that contain acne triggers. Avoid the fatty acid IPM (isopropyl myristate) and its chemical cousins, including isopropyl palmitate, isopropyl lanolate, myristalmyristate, isopropyl isothermal, isostearylneopentanoate and more.

- Other cloggers are potassium chloride, sodium chloride, marine algae or seaweed (look for names like chlorella, red algae, kelp, sea aster, spirulina, corallina officinalis, asparagopsisarmata, bladderwrack, dulse, rockweed, ulvalactuca, sargassum, alginic acid, laminariafucus, vesiculosus), decylolate, oleic acid, oleyl alcohol, octyl stearate, octyl palmitate and isocetyl stearate and PPG myristyl propionate, sodium lauryl sulfate (SLS), sodium laureth sulfate, laureth-4, lanolin and acetylated lanolin, and most natural butters and oils, except fragrance-free sunflower and mineral oil.



Evaluate all hair products, wefted hair, loose hair and synthetic hair if breakouts are concentrated on the hairline, forehead, temples, sides of the face, neck and jawline, sideburns, scalp, behind the ears or upper back. Whatever you put in your hair will migrate onto your skin. You perspire when you toss and turn in your sleep, get stressed, rush through your day, climb stairs, and exercise. Human hair should be shampooed before your weave or braids. The chemicals in synthetic and human hair can cause itching, rashes and acne, so keep this hair away from your skin. Hairspray must be light and unscented; cover your face with a cheap paper plate before you spray. This trick won't work with oil sheen, braid spray or scented hairspray.

Avoid

- pressing creams, butters and oils
- oil-sheen, hairspray and braid spray
- mousse
- locking wax (except hard bees wax)
- curl activator
- scalp grease
- brown gel
- scented gel
- keratin treatments and protein conditioners
- aromatherapy oils, other oils

Problem oils

- Coconut oil, cocoa butter, shea butter, sweet almond oil, carrot oil, olive oil, apricot kernel oil, palm kernel oil, castor oil, products labeled "argan oil", Moroccan oil, vitamin E oil, wheat germ oil, aromatherapy oil blends, jojoba waxes and esters, and scented oils.

Safe oil

- Fragrance-free sunflower oil

Avoid these product lines if you're acne prone

- Abba, Affirm, African Pride, Argan Oil, Aussie, Aveda, Avlon
- Beautiful Textures, Bed Head, Bee's Wax hair products, Biosilk, Blue Magic, Bone Straight, Botanicals, Bumble & Bumble
- Cantu, Care Free (except Care Free Lite), Carol's Daughter, Carrot Oil, Circle of Friends, CitreShine, coconut oil, Crème of Nature, Curl Junkie
- D'arcy's Botanicals, Dark & Lovely, Davines, Design Essentials, Deva, Doo Gro, Dr. Miracles, Dove, Dudley, Duke
- Eden, Enjoi, Enjoy
- GarnierFructis, Giovanni, Glover's, Goldwell
- Hair Rules, His Mix (Mixed Chicks for Men)
- IC, Influence, Isoplus
- Jessicurl, JLife, JML, Joico



- Kemi Oyl, Kenra, Keracare, Kerapro, Kinky-Curly, KitiKiti
- Let's Jam, Luster
- Mane and Tail, Marrakech Oil, Matrix, Miss Jessie's Curly Pudding, Mixed Chicks, Mizani, Mop, Moroccan Oil, Motions, Murray's
- Nairobi, Neutrogena T-Gel, Nexxus, Nioxin Protectives
- Ojon, Olive Oil products, One Better "Instant Shine" Finishing Gloss, Optimum, Organic Root Stimulator, Organix, Oyin
- Pantene Relaxed & Natural, Paul Mitchell and generics, Philosophy, Phyto, Pink Oil, Proclaim, Proline, ProStyle, Purology
- Quidad
- Redken
- S Curl, Sensitive by Nature, Shea Moisture, Shea Terra, Soft Sheen "Optimum Oil Therapy", Sportin' Waves, Suave, Sulfur 8
- TCB Hair Food, Talijah Wahid, Tresemme
- Warm Spirit, Wen and dozens more.

Safe hair products

- Neutrogena T-Sal Shampoo
- Care Free Lite Gel Activator
- Gabriel Correctives
- Free & Clear hair products
- Original Formula Infusium 23 leave-in
- L'Anza spray leave-in
- ProStyl Clear Ice
- American Crew Firm Hold Gel
- Vanicream Cream
- Vaseline and fragrance-free sunflower oil.

Toothpaste can cause small breakouts and darkening around and below the corners of the mouth, especially if it contains sodium lauryl sulfate (SLS), tarter control, fluoride and aromatic flavors. Keep toothpaste in your mouth, where it belongs. If it gets on your skin, use cleanser to remove it. Look for SLS-free toothpaste.

Avoid problematic cosmetics – Red dyes, know acne triggers, are found in foundations, blushes, lipstick and powders, MAC foundations, mineral make-up and powders (especially Studio Fix), Shiseido, Lancôme, Estee Lauder, Makeup For Ever, L'Oreal, Chanel, Flori Roberts, Fashion Fair, Posner, Iman and many other cosmetics. **Re-evaluate** your cosmetics and moisturizers if breakouts continue. Avoid make-up that sticks to the sink when you wash it off. Acne-safe red dye alternatives: Iron oxides and carmine.

*See the [Color Additive Labeling Guide](#) to identify FD&C red dyes by their CI number.



Scalp Problems and Acne

Scaling, inflammation and/or itching on the scalp, hairline, ears, brows, forehead or side of the nose? You may have seborrhea or seborrheic dermatitis, common genetic conditions that are easy to treat. Part of an oily, acne prone, sensitive skin profile, this worsen dramatically

- in cold weather
- during stressful times
- when using harsh soaps and perfumes, and
- with infrequent shampooing.

Ignoring scalp issues – can lead to moderate-to-severe dandruff, unsightly scaling, reddening of the inner cheeks, forehead and hairline, hyper-sensitive skin, a pink or light-pigmented patchy rash, tiny red bumps on the face and scalp, an itchy scalp, thinning hair and hair loss (brows, scalp and eyelashes). Warning: Don't use a brush, scratch your scalp (or let a stylist do so), pat or rub your scalp. Thinning hair, itching, dead skin build-up, inflamed sores and bumps will only get worse. Low thread count pillowcases can thin fragile hair on the side you sleep, so switch to satin, silk or high-count cotton.

Hormones

Hormones are acne triggers and linked to breakouts and hyperpigmentation – including low estrogen birth control pills, Norplant®, OrthoEvra® IUD, Provera, Depo Provera®, Lupron Depot® (testosterone), progesterone-only pills (Errin®, Ortho Micronor® and others), Premarin®, PremPro®, polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), hormonal changes, fibroids, imbalances, irregular periods, PMS/PMDD and obesity (fat cells can boost the body's estrogen production). Pills advertised to help clear acne don't live up to the claims, and can cause breakouts, dry eye, sun sensitivity, melasma and other major health problems.

Pregnancy, post-partum and menstrual cycles – can cause hormonal flare-ups. Use a calendar to or smart phone app to track your cycle. Practice diligent skin care and sun care throughout the month. Pay close attention to your lifestyle to counteract problems during these times. **Avoid direct sun.** Protect your neck (which darkens) and face (watch for dark melasma patches). Pregnant and lactating women should discontinue retinoids, antibiotics and hydroquinone, and discuss skin care products, vitamins and other nutritional supplements, OTC medications and recent Accutane® (isotretinoin) use with their physician.

Note: Individual results may vary and require compliance with corrective home care products, diligent sun protection, professional treatments, recognizing your acne triggers, and making important lifestyle changes, all of which must be monitored and maintained on a long-term basis.

