

ACNE- Winning the Battle

Can anything effectively fight
acne...and win?

Try to recall the first time you discovered that angry little bump resting prominently on your face. Did the bump appear by itself? Or did “cousin” bumps suddenly start popping up everywhere? It starts usually during our teenage years and for many of us, plagues us on some level throughout life. It can destroy beautiful smooth skin, displaying itself in the form of blackheads, whiteheads, or worse – large angry red cysts that leave telltale residual scarring in their wake. Acne is a dreaded diagnosis for parents who agonize watching their children suffer through this twisted right of passage; for the teenagers who not only have to battle those constant hormonal changes to their body, but now have this added to their roster; and for adults who can never completely get rid of it. Can anything effectively fight acne...and win?

But what is acne exactly, and why does it create such agony? To understand this, we need to look at how acne forms on the skin. We all have sebaceous glands in our skin. These sebaceous glands produce sebum and oil, which keep our skin soft and smooth. In normal skin, the sebum rises through the hair follicle and exits easily. When dead skin cells or other matter disrupt this normal balance and clog these glands, the sebum isn't able to exit. This is the beginning of acne.

Acne develops in three stages – and intervention is important because these stages can progress rapidly. The first stage produces blackheads and whiteheads. Contrary to what many of us may think, the black substance in the pimple is not dirt...it is sebum that has oxidized and turned black. Whiteheads are

actually blackheads that contain a mixture of the sebum and dead skin cells, forming a white residue (pus) that appears when they are broken...or squeezed.

The second stage can produce a more emergent level of acne – pustules and papules. Trapped in the gland, the sebum and dead skin cells can become infected with bacteria, which can multiply quickly in the absence of air. This forms larger infected cellular masses, known clinically as pustules. If bacteria do not form, the cellular mass can continue to build, forming conical papules. Papules do not contain infected matter, distinguishing them from pustules. However, papules often occur in clusters.


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in this fight...HOPE.

In the third stage of acne, nodules and cysts form deep below the skin's surface. Both can be quite painful, and unfortunately, often do not respond well to over-the-counter relief. Unfortunately, a most undesired hallmark of acne's “afterlife” often occurs – the scarring. Scarring can be mild or substantial, and ranges from small, depressed scars characterized by a loss of tissue to the increased (overgrowth) tissue masses, known as hypertrophic scars or keloids.

There is help, but effectively treating acne can be overwhelming and confusing. The treatment depends on the stage or stages of acne present, with variations that are too numerous to list here. Common treatments include topical retinoid (vitamin A) therapy, topical antimicrobials (to combat infected pores),

oral antibiotics, and other oral medications. Other forms of treatment that are often effective, especially on repairing scarred tissue, include microdermabrasion, laser therapy, and chemical peels.

A new laser solution was recently cleared by the FDA and shows promising results in the fight to clear acne. Remarkably, it is not a painful treatment, and requires no numbing gels or lengthy treatment times. Aesthera's ISOLAZ™ treats acne, and at the same time, cleanses the pores of the sebaceous material that causes acne to erupt. It uses a combination therapeutic broadband light and a gentle vacuum to help rid the skin of the acne-causing impurities. The vacuum gently grips the affected area, clearing the pores of the sebaceous waste. At the same time, the laser penetrates the affected skin area and kills the bacteria. This treatment gives hope to patients who may not have previously responded to topicals, antibiotics, or other painful laser treatments. In recent studies using the ISOLAZ™ treatment, 64 percent of people who were unresponsive to traditional treatments had better than 75 percent clearance.

While no treatment result can be promised, there is an excellent chance that this four-letter word can be erased – or at least minimized! Treatment is always based on the individual and consideration for past treatment successes or failures are important in choosing the best treatment option for your skin. However, there is a new four-letter word in this fight...HOPE. 

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