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How to Handle Acne (Adult onset or Teenage years)

The typical strategy used by most dermatologists is to recommend an antibiotic -- typically tetracycline-type derivatives designed to kill infections. In this case, it is propioniform types of bacteria that are responsible for the actual inflammation and infection that occurs on your face.

Propionibacterium acnes can be found on the surface of everyone's skin. Acne flair-ups result when the bacteria block your pores, which lead to inflammation. Antibiotics can in fact be very useful to clear up your acne. Other conventional treatments include using topical agents such as benzyl peroxide, or in extreme cases harsher treatment drugs like Accutane.

However, I don't think anyone should be using Accutane (generically known as isotretinoin), and strongly advise against it.

It's actually the only drug classified as category X, meaning it is 100 percent guaranteed to cause birth defects. As of 2002, if you are a woman of child bearing age, you have to get a pregnancy test before it can be prescribed!

It also has other side effects, such as feelings of depression, aggression, and suicide. Although these treatments typically do work, it's important to realize that they in NO way, shape or form treat the underlying cause of your acne.

How to Treat the Root Cause of Your Acne

What you want to do is to eliminate the *underlying reason* that is causing the propioniform bacteria to result in these cysts or lesions. Fortunately, there are some very simple strategies that will accomplish just that, that work nearly every single time. What most experts will tell you about acne is that diet has nothing to do with it. Well nothing could be further from the truth. What has become clearly apparent is that your diet has *everything* to do with it.

If you are predisposed to developing these acne lesions, and are eating a diet that is causing your insulin levels and associated insulin growth factors to rise, then you will have acne.

This happens when you eat fats and refined sugars, it causes a surge of insulin and an insulin-like growth factor called IGF-1 in your body. It can also cause your cells to become resistant to the insulin and thereby having insulin build-up in your body. This can lead to an excess of male hormones, which cause your pores to secrete sebum, a greasy substance that attracts acne-promoting bacteria. Additionally, IGF-1 causes skin cells known as keratinocytes to multiply, a process that is also associated with acne. So, the simple solution is to radically reduce the amount of food you consume that is causing your body to make too much insulin or cause your cells to become insulin resistant. The main culprits here are sugar, and ALL grain carbohydrates as they're converted into sugar in your body. This includes food items such as:

Dairy – (butter, cheese, yogurt, milks, etc.)

Animal meats – (pork, turkey, beef, fish, chicken, etc.)

Processed oils – (olive oils, coconut, grapeseed, etc.)

Eggs – (whites and yolks)

Wheat – (all wheat & gluten)

You'll want to replace refined sugars and fats with vegetable & healthy starch carbohydrates as they metabolize slowly and tend to not cause spikes in your insulin production.

Other Important Factors to Consider When Treating Acne

There are two other important factors to consider, especially if you've tried the conventional approach to treating your acne.

Establish proper balance of bacteria -- If you've been given antibiotics it's very important to take a probiotic supplement. Antibiotics are indiscriminate killers that wipe out good bacteria in your gut as well as the propioniform bacteria on your face. One common side effect of that is an overgrowth of yeast. If you are a woman, you may experience vaginal yeast infections, but both men and women can develop yeast/fungus as a result of disrupting the balance of bacteria in your gut. (use our ALIVE™ product!)

Of course, by reducing your intake of food that bad bacteria and yeast thrive on, i.e. refined sugars and animal foods, you will also help reestablish the proper balance of bacteria in your gut.

Optimize your vitamin D levels – Lastly, what we've now found is that vitamin D is crucially important to establishing a healthy immune system and controlling virtually any type of infection.

When you optimize your vitamin D levels you make over 200 antimicrobial peptides (also called host defense peptides). They are an essential component of your innate immune response, and are potent, broad spectrum antibiotics. (Use our IMMUNITY™ product!)

How do hormones affect acne?

Hormones have a major role in the development of acne, and although the exact mechanism behind their powerful influence is unknown, we do know that androgen hormones gum up the follicle by triggering oil (sebum) production. Androgens are the so called “male hormones” and are present in males and females. They are produced by the testes, ovaries and the adrenal glands. The most well known androgens are testosterone and its breakdown product dihydrotestosterone (DHT).

Why is all of this important in regards to acne? Because research has shown that there are androgen receptors in the base of the oil gland and also in the cells that line the pores! If there are high levels of testosterone and DHT floating around the body, they are highly capable of binding onto these receptors. To put it simply, when these hormones attach to the oil glands (aka. receptors) in the skin, they trigger the gland to produce more oil as well as feed the bacteria and then an inflamed acne lesion is well on its way to surfacing. So, by lowering androgen and testosterone levels in the body, the skin will not produce as much or no acne.

Also at work is DHEA, the chief precursor to testosterone. DHEA causes the growth of and increased productivity of the oil (sebaceous) gland. DHEA levels start rising well before puberty when the adrenal glands start producing this chemical. At this time, acne starts to appear in genetically predisposed teenagers.

One component to fluctuating or increased hormone levels is the food we consume. The typical American diet that is highly acidic and high in saturated fats, processed grains, meat fats, refined sugar and low in fresh vegetables, fruit, fiber, antioxidants and seaweed has been shown in many studies to either increase or decrease testosterone and androgen levels, respectively. Therefore, a healthy diet is one form of natural treatment for hormonal acne.

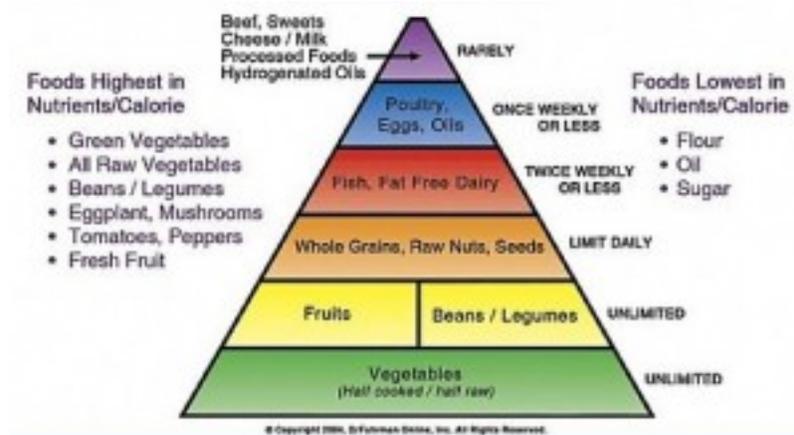
Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS)

PCOS is a condition in which women have an imbalance of female sex hormones. It is linked to low levels of estrogen and progesterone and high androgen levels (male hormones typically found in small amounts in women). It is not completely understood why or how the changes in hormone levels occur. This hormonal imbalance causes the woman’s ovaries to not release eggs, instead, they form very small cysts.

Symptoms of PCOS include: lack of a period or an irregular period, body hair growing on the chest, naval, face or around the nipples, thinning of the hair on the head, acne, dark skin markings around the neck, armpits, groin or breasts as well as decreased breast size. The increase in the male hormone,

androgen, is responsible for causing these male-characteristic symptoms. We now know that insulin resistance is the primary cause of PCOS!

Eat the Proper Diet



In 1984, the first study was conducted in Finland that showed a diet-hormone connection.

Lower saturated fat consumption– Dr. Esa Hamalainen and her team showed that by switching from a diet high in saturated fat to one with 38% less fat and more inclusive of polyunsaturated fats (nuts, seeds, algae, leafy greens) for six weeks, there was a significant reduction in androstenedione (precursor to testosterone) and testosterone in the blood. Over the years, the results of this study have been reproduced again and again.

Increase fiber consumption– In other studies, in addition to lowering fat consumption, increasing fiber consumption has also been evaluated. What has been found is that a high fiber diet will also decrease blood testosterone, DHT and DHEA. In America, the average daily consumption of fiber is 13 grams. The recommended daily dosage is 25 grams for women and 38 grams for men. As you can see, it may be beneficial for anyone suffering from acne to increase his or her fiber.

Decrease milk consumption– If you recall from above, DHT is able to bind to the receptors in the oil glands and “turn them on” so as to trigger oil production and acne. The problem with milk, in correlation to acneic skin, is that the hormones have already been converted into DHT by the cow and enter the human system ready to bind to an oil gland and create a breakout. Dr. William Danby, Dermatologist, who has researched the diet-acne connection since the 1970’s, discovered this information.

Increase alkaline foods and decrease acidic foods– meat based proteins coffee, alcohol, sugar and processed grains, items heavily consumed in the typical America diet, are acid forming in the system. Fruits, vegetables and whole grains are alkalizing to the system. Over-acidification is known as acidosis.

The main symptom of acidosis is fatigue. This is universal. Other symptoms include: loss of enthusiasm for life, loss of sex drive, poor sleep quality, depression and tiring quickly both mentally and physically. Advanced stage symptoms of acidosis include: sensitivity to cold, low blood pressure, hypo or hyperthyroid and low blood sugar. These symptoms

are caused because the main minerals that are required to nourish the nervous system, such as calcium, magnesium, and potassium, are the very same minerals that the body uses to neutralize acids!

Because stress also causes acidity it is not surprising that studies have shown that alkaline foods neutralize these acids and reduce cortisol level, the stress hormone (which we mention below is present at higher levels in acne patients).

Just by eating more fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains in replace of meat, sugar and other processed foods you will not believe how amazing you feel in just a few days!

Stress Reduction- yes, it does affect our hormones!

These days, starting from kindergarten, the pressure is on. We all experience it and try our best to reduce it. Even one night of lost sleep will cause your body to be insulin resistant for days!

Simply put, stress activates the adrenal glands to produce extra androgen hormones, which eventually results in inflamed acne breakouts in acne-prone skin. These extra hormones stimulate the sebaceous glands in the skin and trigger a breakout. The stress-hormone connection is more of a problem for women than it is for men because they produce most of their male hormones (androgens) in their adrenal glands. Men, on the other hand, produce most of their male hormones in the testes and only a very small amount in the adrenal glands. Men's primary hormone is testosterone is even when they do get stressed and the body produces extra, it does not have as big of an impact as it does for women. Women produce about one tenth of the amount of testosterone as men do so a sudden surge of additional testosterone can be significant.

BOTTOM LINE: fix your diet, optimize your Vitamin D3 levels, balance hormones, take a good probiotic and remove stress.

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