

YOUR ANTI-ACNE ARSENAL

GLOW talked to some leading Dermatologists about their tried and true treatments to stop acne dead in its tracks

by Wendy Lewis

Always look for oil-free and non-comedogenic products that won't clog pores...

With hundreds of acne products lining drugstore shelves and department store counters, infomercials with rock stars touting their cures, how do you know which one to use? Ask your dermatologist.

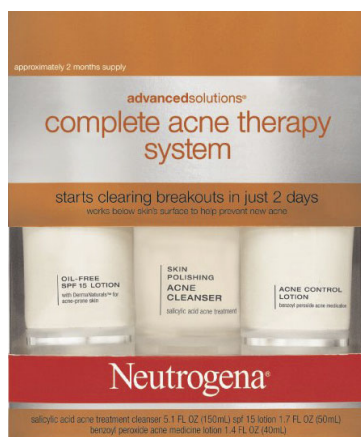
Unfortunately acne is an equal opportunity skin condition that affects teens as young as age 12 up to adults, women and men, in their 50's. There is no doubt that coping with nagging breakout problems continues as you age. Sometimes acne goes away, but it can also get worse or spots can creep up on you even if you had clear skin in high school. Prescription treatments range from topical to oral, depending on the extent of the acne condition. The challenge for acne sufferers is to find the ideal balance between using a regimen that works consistently without experiencing problematic side effects and redness, dryness or peeling, and increased sun sensitivity, that causes them to stop using their medication so they don't get the benefits. As most Dermatologists will tell you, acne is a chronic skin condition and the key to controlling it long term is to keep using your medication even when you don't see blemishes.

KEY INGREDIENTS

Benzoyl peroxide is the most universally effective active ingredient for acne which works to remove excess oil and dead skin cells that clog pores. While it is well tolerated by most people, it can cause excessive dryness, scaling, redness, burning and stinging, especially with sensitive skin. One of the new developments in acne therapy is the use of products that combine more than one ingredient. These combination products reduce the number of times a medication needs to be applied in one day. For example, Epiduo® Gel combines a retinoid and benzoyl peroxide in one convenient

tube. Sulfur is often combined with other active ingredients such as salicylic acid or benzoyl peroxide. Alone or in combination, it works to remove dead skin cells that clog pores and remove excess oil.

Salicylic acid, called "sal acid" by skincare professionals, prevents pores from clogging by slowing down the shedding process of cells inside the hair follicles. It may also get rid of whiteheads and blackheads. The most commonly used alpha hydroxy acids in acne products are glycolic acid and lactic acid. The benefits include removal of dead skin cells, reduction of inflammation and stimulation of new, smoother skin.



Neutrogena salicylic acid acne treatment

Another relative newcomer to the prescription acne medication scene is Aczone Gel, a topical antibiotic. It uses a patented technology called SMP (Solvent Micro Particulate) which helps reduce acne without causing severe

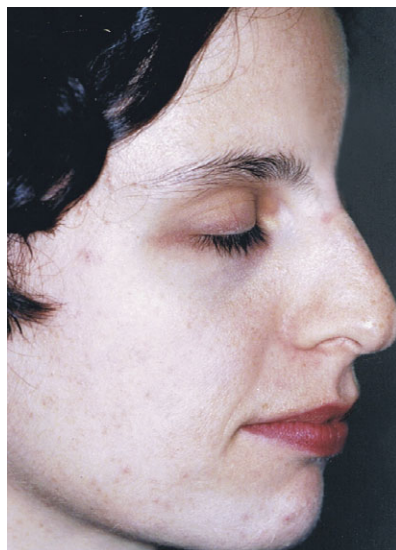
irritation. It is applied twice daily to acne prone areas after gentle cleansing on dry skin. It has a gritty feel when applied which is normal. Side effects include possible redness, and if it is used with benzoyl peroxide, your skin can turn a yellow or orange hue temporarily, so follow your doctor's directions for best results.

The rule of thumb when beginning any acne treatment program is to start out with a lower strength concentration and gradually increase the strength as your skin tolerates it. Benzoyl peroxide is often the first one to try, as it is well tolerated by most people. You can experiment to see what works including trying out one treatment in the evening and another during the day. According to New York City Dermatologist Dr. Ronald Shelton, "If you have oily skin, you will do better to stick with gel formulations or solutions. If your skin tends to be dry in places, choose a cream or lotion formula. Always look for

Photos courtesy of Dr. Judith Hellman



Before Pulse Dye Laser treatments



After 2 treatments



5 years after last treatment

oil-free and non-comedogenic products that won't clog pores than can result in acne eruptions." Dr. Shelton tells patients that while it is perfectly safe to apply benzoyl peroxide with the fingers, they should be sure to wash their hands well afterwards as benzoyl peroxide can bleach towels and other fabrics. He also advises that applying benzoyl peroxide to the face at bedtime can permanently bleach colored pillowcases.

Many of us think that acne is caused by doing something wrong in your daily skin regimen, like not cleansing properly or scrubbing too harshly, which is not always the case. Acne is caused by several factors, such as oil glands, hormones, and genetics, which you have no control over.

TREATMENTS THAT WORK

According to New York City Dermatologist Dr. Judith Hellman, "Unlike oral antibiotics and Accutane®, laser treatments for acne focus on the mechanism in the skin that enables acne. Most light based systems target P. Acnes, a bacteria that lives in the sebaceous glands and is considered causative in the red (inflammatory) pimples in acne. Once treated by a light source, P. Acnes temporarily disappears from the oil glands and acne seems to stop. However, P. Acnes recolonizes the sebaceous glands after a period, and acne flares again. This happens with

various LED type treatments as well as IPL and other similar devices. This is not the case with my "go to" treatment, the pulse dye laser. The pulse dye laser provides a lasting solution for the acne. As opposed to other lasers, the pulse dye laser aims to eliminate the base of the pimples. After a series of treatments, the acne lesions can no longer survive since their support for survival is lasered away. As such, these treatments provide long lasting results without relapses, unlike the other methods or light sources."

Microdermabrasion delivers noticeable skin clearing results just after one treatment session, and helps keep breakouts under control. The SilkPeel™ Pore Clarifying System (www.envymedical.com) uses a patented technology called Dermalinfusion™ which is a process of using an abrasive tip to remove the surface layers of the skin and at the same time, infuse clarifying active ingredients deep into the skin where they can get to work to clear blemishes. A regimen of monthly SilkPeel™ treatments combined with an effective home care acne treatment program will keep skin looking radiant and clear long term. ❖

For further information, Dr. Ron Shelton at www.thenyac.com; Dr. Judi Hellman at www.bigappleskin.com