

Types of Acne

Acne is a disorder of hair follicles and sebaceous glands, the glands that secrete sweat on your skin. As you may already know, they occur during adolescence in both men and women, and it tends to get worse in people with oily skin. It is very common on the face, but can also appear on the neck, back, and arms and legs. It is a myth that acne is due to a bad oily diet or poor hygiene, it is purely due to overactive hormones or bad genes passed along the family tree.

An acne starts off being a comedo, an enlarged hair follicle that is infected with bacteria and oil from the skin. The amount of bacteria growing within the comedo is proportional to the amount of oil that is produced from the skin. So you should already know that keeping your skin moist but not very oily is a smart idea to prevent breaking out with acne. Eventually, the skin around the comedo becomes inflamed due to the human immune response against this infected spot, and a baby acne is formed! You can get either an inflammatory or non-inflammatory acne as explained below.

Inflammatory acne:

Pustules:

These are tiny round spots that are obviously inflamed and contain pus (white blood cells). At the base it appears reddish, and it has a white center. These are normally caused by chemical irritation from parts of the sebaceous gland secretion, including sweat.

Papules:

These are like small pink bumps on the skin, they are tender and should eventually clear up by itself over time.

Cysts:

These are like pustules and are also lesions filled with pus, that lie deep within the skin. Cysts are generally painful because of their inflammatory nature, and they result because of a burst comedo's contents being infected itself over the surrounding skin area. Be careful by not bursting cysts as it can be very painful, and it will leave a deep scar for life.

Acne conglobata:

This rare type of acne develops on the back, bottom and thorax. It is an accumulation of pustules and cysts, and this may be due to a strong bacterial infection; which needs to be treated immediately by visiting a physician as soon as possible.

Non-inflammatory acne:

Closed comedo:

If a comedo stays underneath the skin surface, it can be called a closed comedo. They look like white bumps on the skin, and are commonly called whiteheads.

Open comedo:

If unlike a closed comedo, the comedo pushes towards the upper surface of the skin, it becomes an open comedo. This forms a black bump on the skin because of the accumulation of melanin pigment in that area, and are commonly called blackheads.

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About the Author

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