

What is it?

Acne is a condition causing spots and painful bumps on the skin, also known as pimples. Acne can appear on the face, back and chest. It includes different kinds of spots, like blackheads (small, blocked pores) and whiteheads (small, hard bumps with a white centre). Acne can also cause pustules (spots with a lot of pus visible). In severe cases, acne may lead to scarring. Acne usually starts in puberty, as a result of hormonal changes. It can affect adults as well.

What will my GP do now?

Your treatment will depend on the severity of your acne. For mild and moderate acne, your GP may:

- Give you general advice about how to take care of your skin (see 'What can I do?')
- Suggest trying a skin product designed for acne-prone skin
- Suggest other treatments, like topical or oral antibiotics, or the oral contraceptive pill for women

If your acne is severe, your GP may refer you to a specialist (dermatologist) for a more aggressive form of medication. Many acne treatments are not safe for use during pregnancy and breastfeeding. Your GP may advise you to use an appropriate form of contraception, if necessary.

What will my GP do in the future?

Your GP may want to see you again between six weeks to six months from starting treatment. If your treatment is not working well for you, they may switch treatments or refer you to a specialist.

What can I do?

Cleanse regularly with oil and soap-free products. Keep your hair clean and off the face and neck. Trial an over the counter face wash that contains salicylic acid. Use water-based, oil-free facial products. Remove all make-up before sleeping. Avoid picking or squeezing pimples. Maintain a healthy lifestyle and eat plenty of fresh foods. You may wish to see a dietitian for healthy meal planning.



What questions could I ask my doctor?

- What are the likely triggers of acne?
- How can I best look after my skin?
- What if my skin doesn't improve?
- What medication is recommended?



What supports are available?

Liverpool Hospital Dermatology Department

The Liverpool Hospital Dermatology Department provides a broad range of skin services with specialist dermatologists. With staff specialising in common and rare skin diseases, the team offer treatment for all ages, from newborns to the elderly and pregnant women. Ask your GP for a referral.

Private clinics

Private specialist clinics are available in the South Western Sydney Health District. Ask your GP for a referral.

Where can I learn more?

- **Better Health Channel** – acne: betterhealth.gov.au

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

Health Resource Directory factsheets are endorsed by South Western Sydney PHN's Community Advisory Committee and local GPs

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