



Bye -bye blemishes

Bid adieu to embarrassing breakouts
with the latest adult acne treatments

With maturity, comes clarity, or so they say. But that's not always the case when it comes to your skin. In fact, adult acne is on the rise (experts don't know why), with the average age of those fighting the mighty pimple, climbing to 26 years old. Increasingly, acne is becoming a life long skin condition for some people. The downside: the older you are, the less your skin is able to repair itself, so the more persistent the acne can become. But because of this, cosmetic companies are rising to the challenge, creating product lines to specifically treat acne on adult skin. Containing ingredients like hyaluronic acid (which evens skin tone and texture) these products also treat other problems that plague mature skin, most importantly, signs of aging. So, as acne disappears, skin is left looking younger. Herewith, the help you need to end unsightly spots.

Control oil

The overproduction of sebum (oil) is one of the primary causes of breakouts. "It is very common in teenagers because that's when the oil-secreting glands really start working," explains Dr. Jody Alpert Levine of Plastic Surgery and Dermatology, NYC. If you had overactive sebaceous glands in your teens, it is likely that you will continue to have them through adulthood. There are numerous triggers. For instance, when you are under stress the adrenal gland releases testosterone-type hormones that increase sebum production. Usually oil drains to the surface, but if dead skin cells are clogging pores, oil gets locked in, leading to a breakout. A good way to combat oily skin is with products that include oil-absorbing clay. Zinc and caffeine also regulate sebum production and control bacteria, preventing inflammation, while at the same time soothing skin.

Cleanse consistently

Cleansing your face daily is imperative to control the amount of oil on your skin and to remove dirt and dead skin cells - both of which clog pores. Many acne-specific cleansers are gel or foam-based and include salicylic acid, which promotes the skin's natural exfoliation process, shedding the skin's top layer of dirt, sunscreens, oil and makeup. After cleansing, dab on a toner to further unclog pores and shrink their appearance. Retinol, a type of Vitamin A, which is used in many cleansers and acne treatment creams, is also an effective exfoliator. It alters the way the sebaceous glands drain and prevents pore blockage by allowing oxygen into pores. Oxygen kills bacteria, and when bacteria is reduced, so are breakouts.

Beat bacteria

Most creams that treat acne contain benzoyl peroxide or sulfur. These ingredients clear the skin by eliminating bacteria and removing excess oil that is congesting the follicle. Other ingredients like eucalyptus, tea tree oil, and chamomile act as astringents, thereby also eliminating bacteria. Because certain ingredients in treatment creams can make skin more sensitive to light, the best time to use them is before bed. Antibiotic creams can be very drying so spot treatments are recommended for targeted imperfections.

Tame inflammation

When unsightly- whiteheads appear, it's because the pimple is inflamed. Ingredients like camphor and menthol (found in many of the latest acne fighting products) minimize inflammation. If you're prone to inflammation, be sure to stay away from heavy makeup and thick moisturizers that block pores and contribute to inflammation. Stick to a light moisturizer with a watery consistency instead. "It's what the ingredients are that makes the difference," says Dr. Levine.



Laser tag

Dr. Levine uses laser and light treatments on her adult patients who suffer from the worst cases of acne. The laser shocks the oil glands, preventing clogged pores that lead to breakouts. It takes approximately six weeks of bi-weekly treatments for results to show. If laser treatments aren't for you, you can also lessen old acne scars with skin tone enhancers.