



Taking Control of Acne  
*By Rick L. Moore, MD*  
*Board-certified Dermatologist*

Acne is the world's most common skin affliction, striking approximately 25% of the adult population, and more than 90% of all adolescents. Yet there remains a host of misconceptions concerning this skin disorder.

Contrary to popular belief, acne is not caused by the foods we eat or how often we wash our face, though those factors could potentially exacerbate the condition. Acne develops beneath the surface of the skin as a result of abnormal cell shedding that blocks the follicle.

There are a variety of factors that may contribute to the condition. During puberty, both male and female adolescents experience an increase in androgens, which enlarges the sebaceous glands and increases their production of oil that often clogs the pores. As you enter adulthood, factors such as hormones, menopause, or childbirth may enhance your chances for developing acne.

There is no cure for acne, but there are a number of treatments that can help keep it under control, including creams and cleansers that include retinoids, salicylic acid, benzoyl peroxide, and antibiotics. If acne is more severe, oral antibiotics can help tremendously as well. In some patients, acne is caused by a hormonal imbalance or may become particularly inflamed around a menstrual cycle. In those patients, androgen-blocking birth control pills or other medications may be prescribed. Finally, a dermatologist may treat acne with a medication called Accutane, which is normally prescribed as a last resort as it inspires multiple side effects.

There are a few tips you can utilize in your daily life to help improve acne.

- Wash your face, but not excessively. Over-washing could dry out your skin, inspiring extra oil production and a greater potential for clogged pores.
- Avoid alcohol-based cleansers or harsh scrubs.
- Only use cosmetic products that have been branded 'non-comedogenic' (non-pore blocking).
- Do not pick at acne. This increases the chances of scarring and can spread bacteria.

- Over the counter products that containing salicylic acid and benzoyl peroxide can help decrease the number of acne lesions

While acne does not pose serious medical hazards, it can produce scarring and compromise self-esteem. If you suffer from acne, you should schedule an appointment with a dermatologist and explore the range of treatments that can transform both your complexion and your confidence.

*Dr. Rick Moore is a board-certified dermatologist practicing at the new Watson Clinic office in Zephyrhills at 6901 Medical View Lane. Immediate appointments are available by calling 813-788-7867.*