

## **ADULT FEMALE ACNE**

Complexion problems in young adult woman are very common. The tendency to develop minor outbreaks does not seem to be related to teenage acne. Many adult woman with acne had mild or no problems as a teenager.

No one is quite sure why there is a tendency for adult women to develop complexion problems. At present most doctors feel this is related to hormonal changes. This is not to say that your hormones are abnormal but normal hormonal fluctuation can cause outbreaks. This is why some women notice that their problem fluctuates with their menstrual cycle. Also hormonal treatments such as birth control pills may help or worsen the problem.

In spite of not knowing the exact cause of adult female acne, there is very effective treatment. The treatment for your specific problem will be based on the exact type of acne you have as well as the type of skin you have.

In general acne is caused by oil glands of the skin breaking open. Oil glands may become plugged from the inside to form blackheads and whiteheads. Blackheads are not caused by dirt since the plug forms from the inside. Dirt does not cause acne. It is not possible to wash your acne away.

It is important to realize that in general food does not cause acne. There are a small percentage of people who feel that certain foods make their problem worse. If this is the case with your complexion, it would be important to avoid any such food which worsens it.

Acne is also not caused by nerves and stress, but may become worse temporarily during times of stress such as examinations or pressure at work. These are usually mild temporary flare ups. Some persons react to stress by picking, squeezing or rubbing their pimples and this can make your complexion problem worse.

Acne of any type has two different parts. There are the large red pimples (“zits”) and the clogged pores blackheads and whiteheads. Therefore there are often two parts of treatment. Antibiotics work for the pimple component and topical creams combat the clogged pores. The exact type of antibiotic you will use will be based on your skin and the type of acne you have. Also the type of clog pore medicine will be determined in the same way.

It is important to remember acne treatment not only helps the current outbreak you have but also prevents new outbreaks. Apply the creams to all areas regularly even if your skin is doing well.

Although acne is temporary occasionally it can leave permanent scarring. One of the major goals of acne treatment is to prevent scarring from developing. The larger a pimple is and the longer it lasts, the greater the chance for a scar to develop. Scars can take the form of pit marks or shallow dents in the skin. Often times I recommend treatment in the office which involves an injection of material directly into the pimple to decrease the swelling immediately. This reduces the chance of a scar developing in the area. If your acne is producing permanent marks, it is important to get it under control as soon as possible to prevent further scarring.

Although adult female acne can be a frustrating problem, it is important to realize that there is very effective treatment for it. Sometimes the treatment may take a few weeks or months to completely be effective but it does help in the vast majority of cases.

If you have any other questions about your problem, please ask me before you leave the office.