

If You Have Acne, You're Not Alone:

Acne affects about 80% of people who are between the ages of 11 and 30. The good news is that you don't have to wait for acne to go away on its own. It can be managed effectively, often with over-the-counter agents. **Don't wait – ask your primary care doctor for help selecting the right options for you.**

Knowing what type of acne you have, whether it's mild, moderate, or severe, will help your primary care doctor customize a treatment plan. With an appropriate, individualized treatment, you should see improvement within 8 to 12 weeks. One of the most concerning results of acne is the formation of scars. They can happen even if you have mild acne, but quick action can help reduce the risk.

Most products for mild to moderate acne are available over-the-counter (OTC). Your doctor can help you choose the most effective regimen. To reduce your risk of developing permanent scars, do not delay treatment.



Treatment	Mild Acne	Moderate Acne	Severe Acne
First-line Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topical retinoid* • Benzoyl peroxide** • Combination of topical retinoid + benzoyl peroxide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topical retinoid • Benzoyl peroxide • Oral antibiotic • Combination therapy (topical retinoid + benzoyl peroxide; benzoyl peroxide + topical antibiotic; topical retinoid + oral antibiotic) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topical combination therapy plus oral antibiotic, or oral isotretinoin
Alternative Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add topical retinoid or benzoyl peroxide if not using already • Consider alternate retinoid • Consider topical dapsone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider another topical combination or oral antibiotic • Add a combined oral contraceptive, oral spironolactone, or both for females) • Consider oral isotretinoin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider another topical combination or oral antibiotic • Add a combined oral contraceptive, oral spironolactone, or both for females) • Consider oral isotretinoin

*Adapalene is available as a single agent OTC as 0.1% gel and as a prescription formulation in 0.1% gel or cream or 0.3% gel daily under the brand name Differin; it is available in a fixed dose combination with 0.1% adapalene and 5% benzoyl peroxide gel (Epiduo® Gel) daily; or 0.3% adapalene and 5% benzoyl peroxide gel (Epiduo® Forte Gel) daily

**Benzoyl peroxide is available OTC as a single agent 2.5–10% wash, bar, gel, foam, lotion or cream daily or twice daily under many brand names including PanOxyl® Acne Maximum Strength Foaming Wash, Neutrogena's Rapid Clear® Stubborn Acne Cleanser

In addition to applying medicated treatment on your skin, you must follow a good skin hygiene regimen.

- Use gentle, non-comedogenic cleansers such as those containing ceramides.
- Avoid gritty scrubs, rough cleansing cloths, astringents, and other irritating products.
- Use a non-comedogenic light moisturizer daily.
- Some acne treatments increase sensitivity to sunlight, so be sure to avoid excessive sun exposure, and use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher.

And remember: It may take 8 to 12 weeks to see improvement in your acne, so be patient and stick to your recommended management plan.

[Society for Pediatric Dermatology: Patient Handouts](#)

This site summarizes the causes of acne, the role of the physician, and the proper use of acne treatments.

[American Academy of Dermatology: Acne](#)

This site includes an overview of acne symptoms and causes and provides tips and recommendations for treatment.

[British Association of Dermatologists: Acne](#)

This site includes an overview of the causes of acne and available treatment options.

[University of California Berkeley Acne Fact Sheet](#)

This site summarizes the causes of acne, its triggers, and available treatment options.