

# BUSTLE

## 11 Myths About Acne Busted, Once & For All

By Carina Wolff



Almost every one of us has dealt with acne at some point, and sometimes it can feel like it's impossible to get rid of those pesky breakouts. It doesn't help that there are so many myths about acne floating around, and what works for one person doesn't always work for another. Whether you get white heads, black heads, zits, or cysts, we've all tried a remedy that has failed miserably. Knowing what is truly effective versus what is just folklore can help take the right steps to

clear up your skin, and it can also help prevent future damage in the long run.

"Acne treatment can be really confusing, and even with good patients and good therapies, treatment failures are common," says dermatologist Mike Swann, MD to Bustle over email. "It takes finding the right treatment for a particular type of acne and patient, which takes some understanding of the different types of acne and which therapies would be best."

Whether you've read something on the internet or heard it from a friend, it's time to put all those acne rumors to rest, once and for all. Here are 11 persistent myths about acne that just aren't true and how you can actually help out your skin.

### 1. Only Teens Get Acne

Most of us cross our fingers that once we are out of our teen years, our skin will magically clear up. Unfortunately, that's not the case. "Although 95 percent of teens do get acne, up to 40 percent of adults also may experience acne, particularly women," says dermatologist Dr. Karen McKoy to Bustle over email.

## 2. You Need To Constantly Wash Your Face

"Over washing can actually make you break out," says Kally Papantoniou, MD FAAD to Bustle over email. "When you scrub or use a soap that is too good at removing facial oils, that may cause your skin to produce rebound oils to compensate, and that can actually lead to an acne flare.

## 3. Eating Chocolate Causes Acne

Chocolate lovers, rejoice! The treat is to responsible for those unwanted breakouts. "Eating 70 percent dark chocolate may help acne because of its anti-inflammatory properties," says [Dr. Ava Shamban](#), Beverly Hills dermatologist and founder of SKINxFIVE to Bustle over email. The real reason chocolate is associated with acne is because its often filled with sugar and dairy.

## 4. Sun Exposure Cures Acne

"So many people think the sun is the cure for their acne, and acne may look better after sun exposure for several reasons," says Papantoniou. "The skin may get tan, and this can mask red bumps and the appearance of acne. These small, short lasting improvements are not worth the damages caused by the sun, including breakdown of collagen and elastin and increase risk of skin cancers."

## 6. Your Diet Doesn't Matter

"It is a difficult concept for many people to think that what seems like a harmless bowl of cereal or rice can cause a break out, it has been confirmed by many medical studies that have shown over and over again the direct link between acne and foods," says Papantoniou. "Foods that should be avoided are dairy, refined sugars, and carbohydrates."

## 7. Moisturizing Causes Acne

"Don't be scared to moisturize your face," says Papantoniou. "Chances are, your skin will actually improve from it. If you use acne cleansers and acne products, your skin gets dried out and irritated over time. It is important to maintain healthy skin that will have fewer break outs and heal much faster by using a moisturizer regularly that is non-comedogenic to prevent breakouts."

#### 8. Sweat Makes You Breakout

Sweat itself doesn't cause acne, but it can cause conditions in which acne is more likely to form. Irritants like dust and dirt are more likely to stick to moist skin, which can lead to clogged pores, according to How Stuff Works. Additionally, acne can appear from the combination of sweat and friction.

#### 9. Over The Counter Medication Doesn't Work

You don't need to get a prescription to have clearer skin. Many inexpensive, over the counter medications can actually work to clear your acne. "There are many over the counter products that can be useful such as benzoyl peroxides and retinols," says Shamban.

#### 10. Rubbing Alcohol Is A Good Choice To Clean Skin

"Rubbing alcohol may kill both the good bacteria and the bad bacteria on your skin," says Shamban. "It is much better to use a salicylic wash to exfoliate the skin which addresses one of the underlying causes of acne, sticky skin cells."

#### 11. The More Treatment, The Better

"Whether initiated by a dermatologist or just a friend, many people are simply overusing their acne treatments," says Swann. "I often recommend slowly implementing a regimen or waiting to add particularly irritating agent until your acne is beginning to clear up to offset this tendency [to use too much]."

When in doubt, always ask your doctor about what the best course of treatment is for your own skin. You can't believe everything you hear!

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