

SPOTLYTE[™]

BY ALLERGAN

Do Pimple Patches Actually Work? Dermatologists Weigh In

By Leah Prinzivalli | March 14, 2019



“Patient” is not an adjective I’d use to describe my attitude towards my skin. When I feel a pimple begin to flare up or notice the beginnings of a fine line, my Type-A personality wants to take immediate action and slather the affected area with as many formulas as I can find. Unfortunately for me, there’s no instant, lightning-in-a-bottle way to tackle skin concerns. Or... is there?



On paper, pimple patches are the zit-zapping miracle product of an acne sufferer’s dreams. But acne isn’t as one-size-fits-all as a sheet of stickers, so we spoke to dermatologists about what you need to know before you peel and stick.

How do pimple patches work?

“Pimple patches are hydrocolloid bandages, which is what doctors used for decades for chronic ulcers and wounds,” says Levin. Picture a clear, adhesive sticker that’s cut to size to fit right over a blemish. “[It] provides an environment that’s more conducive to wound healing,” she notes.



They also draw moisture from the pimple, which helps to flatten it, explains Los Angeles-based dermatologist **Anna Guanche, MD**. “Some types of patches have active ingredients such as salicylic acid, [an exfoliant], which increases effectiveness,” she says.

Similar to how a sheet mask works by helping your face absorb active ingredients, a pimple patch can deliver acne-fighting active ingredients “more efficiently” than just a topical medicine, says Ava Shamban, MD, a dermatologist in Los Angeles.

Brands like Zitsticka take the concept of a healing bandage one step further: the Killa Sticka™ (\$29 for eight) is designed with microneedles. “[These make] tiny pinpricks in the skin to drive and deliver acne-fighting ingredients deeper into the skin,” says Shamban.

Perhaps most importantly, the sticker protects the pimple from probing, impatient fingers that may be inclined to touch or pick the zit — a feat that Guanche describes as “three-quarters of the battle.”

What type of pimples can benefit from a patch?

“Pimple patches can be a great adjunct to acne treatments, especially for those singular, angry looking Mount Vesuvius-type blemishes,” says Guanche. Both Guanche and Shamban agree that patches are best-suited to work on cystic pimples — those hard, red, painful bumps that appear under the skin. “Blackheads and whiteheads are not highly inflamed or swollen, so the patches won’t affect them one way or another,” says Guanche.

Timing is another important factor to consider when deciding whether to use a pimple patch. Levin advises patients to try to catch the zit at its first appearance — so reach for a sticker the moment you feel a zit starting to form. “There are different stages of a pimple, whether it’s starting to become a pustule, a cyst, or when it’s a hyperpigmented patch that’s healing. Patches are not appropriate for a pimple that’s already been picked or popped,” she explains. Shamban agrees, “They would also not be recommended for blood-filled acne or acne that’s been picked to become an open wound.”

Are there any risks to using pimple patches?

As with anything you apply to your skin, dermatologists advise checking the ingredient list on your specific pack of patches for any potential allergies. “A potential concern is irritation if the person is sensitive or allergic to salicylic acid,” says Guanche. Make sure to check the packaging before use.

“It is also possible to overdo the patches, which could lead to dryness and flakiness of the skin surrounding the pimple,” says Guanche. Even worse, dry, flaky skin “is difficult to cover with makeup and thus defeats the purpose,” she says. Look for a package with moisture-binding ingredients like hyaluronic acid to help prevent skin from getting dehydrated while your sticker is doing it’s thing.

<https://thespotlyte.com/news/do-acne-patches-spot-patches-work>