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Here's How To Get Rid of Clogged Pores, According to A Top Dermatologist

It's easier than you think.

By Chloe Hall | July 12, 2019



You know those breakouts that just don't seem to ever disappear? You've tried everything and for some reason you can't get rid of a few blackheads or whiteheads. Clogged pores might be the reason your skin hasn't been able to breathe.

Instead of turning to harsh scrubs or tearful breakdowns (guilty of both), experts have the right tools and information to clear clogged pores causing you strife. [Dr. Anna Guanche](#), a board-certified dermatologist and celebrity beauty expert, shared the blueprint for getting rid of clogged pores once and for all. Below, you'll be able to identify the cause of your skin issue, find the best products to clear out oils and debris on your skin, and target blackhead and whitehead prone areas like your chin and nose. Plus, [Dr. Guanche](#) shares a few pointers on products to completely avoid.



What causes clogged pores?

Skin debris

Dead skin cells and dirt mix with sebum (skin oils) and clog your pores. "If the keratin or dead skin cell plug oxidizes by exposure to oxygen then it turns into a blackhead, explains Dr. Guanche. "If the plug does not get exposed to oxygen then the clogged pore remains as a white head."

Cellular Turnover

"Another contributing factor is slow cellular turnover," says Dr. Guanche. "Increased stress, bad diet, and lack of a great skin care routine can cause your dead skin cells to pile up and clog pores."

How can you unclog your pores?

Dr. Guanche recommends chemical exfoliation and extractions to help remove the gunk from your skin. "Regular use of chemical exfoliation such as glycolic acid or salicylic and extractions help immensely," says Dr. Guanche. "Regular acne facials or mechanical exfoliation with microdermabrasion by an esthetician also can help relieve buildup in the pores." Chemical exfoliation includes the use of exfoliators with ingredients like AHAs (glycolic and lactic acids) and BHAs (salicylic acid). Dr. Guanche adds that retinols also can help improve the cellular turnover of the skin. The great news about chemical exfoliations is that these compounds can be found in a number of forms from creams to lotions to masks. It's all about finding a routine that works for you.

What are the best products to use, according to a dermatologist?



The Cleanser

SkinCeuticals LHA Cleanser Geldermstore.com

\$41.00

"This cleanser has pore decongesting properties via its lactic and salicylic acid component," says **Dr. Guanche**.



The Serum

iS Clinical Active Serum dermstore.com

\$135.00

This serum keeps pores clear with all three acids **Dr. Guanche** recommends. It includes lactic acid, glycolic acid, and salicylic. Dr. Guanche recommends 5 drops to the entire face either morning or night.



The Pads

ZO Skin Health Oil Control Pads Acne Treatment [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)
\$199.00

"This pad contains 2% salicylic acid in a pad form which also gently exfoliates the skin to prevent those stubborn clogged pores," explains **Dr. Guanche**. "You may use this product once a day, but consider starting slow!" The product is also very helpful for clogged pores around the nose.



The Cream

RoC Retinol Correxion Max Daily Hydration Anti-Aging Creme [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



\$24.97

RetinA cream is a prescription by your dermatologist. "This prescription helps increase cellular turnover and keep skin clear of clogged pores and acne," explains Dr. Guanche. You may find a weaker form of RetinA over the counter called "retinol". The RoC Retinol Correxion Max Daily Hydration Anti-Aging Creme is the dermatologist's top pick.

Can unclogging pores reduce their appearance?

Yes and no. "If a pore is clogged for a very long period of time, changes can occur in the tissue of the pore and this can dilate and enlarge the pore," explains Dr. Guanche. It's all about creating a routine where your pores are constantly cleaned in order to reduce a larger appearance of pores.

How should you fight chin-specific clogged pores?

Regular chemical exfoliation works best for chin clogged pores. "I love the ZO pads (2% salicylic acid)," says Dr. Guanche. "These pads work so well for areas that are clogged."

How should you fight nose-specific clogged pores?

Dr. Guanche recommends routine chemical exfoliation coupled with an occasional pore clearing strip could help.

What products should you avoid if you have clogged pores?

Say goodbye to heavy creams and lotions

You should avoid thick creams and lotions that could clog the pores. Dr. Guanche also notes that a poor diet can be negatively affecting your skin. "It has been shown that diets heavy with whey protein (shakes, bars, etc) can cause acne," explains Dr. Guanche. "We clinically see an increase in acne and clogged pores or 'congestion' when our patients consume high dairy diets." Long story short, maybe skip the whey protein milkshake after a workout.

Avoid products that do not say "non-comedogenic"

Comedogenic products are those acne causing products that tend to cause blackheads by blocking the pores of the skin. Skin ingredients that fall under the oils and butter categories, like coconut oil and shea butter, are better avoided.

When in doubt, check with your dermatologist

Monthly facials are also key. Dr. Guanche recommends the Silk Peel Dermal Infusion Facial for clogged pores. It's a non particle microdermabrasion treatment.



Pay attention to your skin

"Adhering to a regular skin care regimen will yield the best results", according to Dr. Guanche.
"The best way to keep your skin clear to is to listen to your skin and use these products according to the amount of buildup you've got!"

<https://www.elle.com/beauty/makeup-skin-care/a28376213/clogged-pores/>