

Lifetime Medical Associates *

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What is acne vulgaris?

Acne vulgaris is called simply 'acne' or 'zits'. Acne is the most common skin problem people have. It occurs in almost all teenagers. As they grow older, their acne usually gets better. Sometimes people in their 20s, 30s, and 40s can get acne, but the older you are, the less likely you are to develop it.

What are the symptoms of acne vulgaris?

People with acne usually have oily skin. They get marks, called 'eruptions', on their skin. These can be blackheads, whiteheads, or pimples with pus. Acne usually occurs on the face, chest, and back. If not treated, acne can leave lasting scars. This is why treatment is so important.



What tests are needed?

Your doctor will examine the acne. Most of the time, this is all that is necessary. Sometimes a sample of your blood will be taken and sent to a laboratory to be analyzed. This is done to learn if there are any unusual reasons for the acne or to help your doctor decide what kind of medicine is best for you.

What treatment is needed?

Many acne medicines are available. Your doctor may prescribe pills, cream, ointment, or lotion to apply to your skin. If the treatment doesn't work, your doctor may refer you to a dermatologist - a doctor who specializes in treating skin problems.



Do

- Do wash your face gently twice daily with a mild soap cleanser
- Do also wash after activities such as sports or exercise that make you sweat
- Do use hair products, skin care products, and make-up that have 'oil-free' on the label
- Do eat a healthy diet rich in fish, fruits, and vegetables. This can help make your skin less oily



Don't

- Don't scrub your face with a washcloth
- Don't squeeze or 'pop' the pimples, because this can leave scars
- Don't wear tight clothes that rub against your skin, or use sporting equipment such as shoulder pads, helmets, and chin straps



Recovery time

Acne medicine should make your acne improve within a month, and your skin should clear up within 2-3 months.

Acne is worse between the ages of 16 and 18, and lessens as you grow older.



Further information on acne vulgaris can be found from:

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