Leyla Weighs In: Getting to the root of acne

Acne is not just the scourge of teenagers swimming in raging hormones, but in adults too who may have hormonal imbalances (i.e., perimenopause) or other health conditions that present as inflammation leading to a breakout.

Rather than resorting to antibiotics which will eventually cause imbalances in the ecosystem of the gut, or dangerous drugs such as Accutane which can cause ulcerative colitis, or skin creams which trade one problem for another: acne for dry, stinging skin, it's important to identify the *cause* of breakouts.

Sugars and other refined carbohydrates feed the *propionibacterium* responsible for acne. Proinflammatory vegetable oils used in chips, fried food and other heavily processed foods only worsen the problem.

Bad bacteria in the gut can manifest as acne on the face, chest and back ('bacne'). Testing for dysbiosis will help identify it so we can get rid of the bacteria. Then, implementing an appropriate probiotic treatment to reinoculate the gut with beneficial bacteria will help reduce if not completely eliminate breakouts due to bacterial overgrowth.

A leaky gut can also cause inflammation resulting in a breakout. Food allergies are often a culprit in acne and are further exacerbated by a leaky gut. An intestinal permeability test can identify if leaky gut exists and create the roadmap for proper nutritional intervention.

Women with PCOS (polycystic ovary syndrome) are often plagued with acne due to high levels of androgens (i.e., DHEA, testosterone). Those afflicted are often given oral contraceptives to regulate hormones but birth control pills can aggravate insulin resistance as well as deplete B vitamins and vitamin C.

Resolving the underlying insulin resistance and hyperinsulinemia with the appropriate diet, supplements and lifestyle changes can help correct the hormone imbalances and diminish breakouts. Please note that many cases of PCOS will require prescription metformin in addition to diet and lifestyle changes.

Estrogen dominance sometimes causes acne, particularly on the lower part of the face (chin area).

A consultation with a qualified nutritionist can help identify and alleviate causes of acne without the dangerous side effects of drugs.

To your health!

As you may know, I've been doing a weekly "Q&A with Leyla" podcast feature with Dr. Hoffman. Now you can get my perspective and expertise every Friday on my own episode

of the *Intelligent Medicine* Podcast. If you missed last week's, you can **listen here**. To be sure you don't miss out on any of my important insights and information, **subscribe today**!