

# Leyla weighs in: How to treat acne

written by Leyla Muedin MS, RD, CDN | June 12, 2014



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

Rather than resorting to antibiotics, which 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 rid 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 also can cause inflammation resulting in a breakout. Food allergies often are 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 road map for proper nutritional intervention.

Women with PCOS (polycystic ovary syndrome) often are plagued with acne due to high levels of androgens such as DHEA and testosterone. Those afflicted often are 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, which only address symptoms. You can read more about natural treatments for acne (including SophytoPro skin care products, Manuka Therapy Cream and olive leaf extract) on the *Intelligent Medicine* website.

To your health!