

Acne -- not just for teenagers

By SHINNELL BURROUGHS • NOV 23, 2014

[Twitter \(http://twitter.com/intent/tweet?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.tinyurl.com%2Fklmlh2v&text=Acne%20--%20not%20just%20for%20teena](http://twitter.com/intent/tweet?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.tinyurl.com%2Fklmlh2v&text=Acne%20--%20not%20just%20for%20teena)



(http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/wrvo/files/styles/x_large/public/201411/Cream_shawncampbell.jpg)

SHAWN CAMPBELL FLICKR

You may have left the carefree days of teenagers years behind long ago, and the physical and emotional changes that come with being that age. But then, if you're an adult, why are you still getting acne?

This week on "Take Care," Dr. Emmy Graber (<http://www.bumc.bu.edu/derm/emmy-graber-md/>) discusses why we continue to get acne as adults and what we can do to treat this disease. Dr. Graber is an assistant professor of dermatology at the Boston University School of Medicine and Boston Medical Center and is also the director of the Boston University Cosmetic and Laser Center.



Listen

9:53

Acne persists (<https://www.aad.org/dermatology-a-to-z/health-and-beauty/every-stage-of-life/adult-skin/adult-acne>) in 50 percent of people in their 20s and you can still have acne even after the age of 50. This could be due to genetics, as well as hormones attacking the oil glands in the skin.

“About 10 percent of teenagers with acne will go on to have adult acne. We just can’t say who that patient might be. Acne is a very complex disorder,” said Graber.

In the early teen years, acne is usually found in the “T-zone,” but as an adult, the acne tends to be on the lower parts of the face. According to Graber, some of these places may be the chin, up the jaw line or on upper parts of the neck. As you get older the typical location of acne can change.

The causes of acne are not completely understood by dermatologists. Food has often been considered a culprit, but Graber says it has not been scientifically proven yet that food can make people break out. Graber says that there's some evidence that some foods could be causing breakouts for certain patients. Two kinds of food that are being researched for a causal link are high glycemic index foods like white breads and carbohydrates, and dairy products.

Stress can cause acne or make existing acne worse because we produce more of the hormone cortisol, which acts on the oil glands and the face layer of the skin to cause acne.

Graber suggests use of washes containing salicylic acid or benzoyl peroxide to combat acne problems. Studies show you should wash your face twice a day, morning and night.

“The biggest mistake that people make when they notice a few blemishes is that they’ll start to wash their face more frequently, because they think dirt is contributing to the problem,” said Graber.

People with clearer skin should use washes two or three times a week and not every day, so they don’t dry out their skin.

If all else fails, (<http://www.npr.org/blogs/health/2011/08/30/140065996/lots-of-acne-treatments-but-scant-evidence-for-which-ones-to-choose>) then Graber advises seeing a dermatologist right away.

RELATED PROGRAM: [TAKE CARE \(/PROGRAMS/TAKE-CARE\)](#)

TAGS: [TAKE CARE \(/TERM/TAKE-CARE\)](#) [ACNE \(/TERM/ACNE\)](#)