

**The dermatologist informs about**

**Acne and blemished skin**

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trykkestedet århus aps - 86 13 62 88

### **What is blemished skin and acne?**

During puberty and adolescence, everyone will experience skin "impurities" such as open and closed comedones (blackheads and whiteheads) and what we commonly call "pimples". The problem is caused by a hormonal effect on the sebaceous glands increasing their production of sebum and making the skin oily. This in return causes comedones to appear which together with skin bacteria can lead to the development of "pimples". The problem is more severe in the facial area, on the shoulders and on the chest and back, where there is a high concentration of sebaceous glands.

**Blemished skin** should be perceived as a relatively normal condition in puberty, and the problem disappears with age.

**Acne**, on the other hand, is a skin disease that is not only active during puberty. The disease will often worsen over the years and can be enduring. In some people, however, acne will improve without treatment but may leave bad scars.

Acne depends on a person's skin type, and many patients with acne have a parent who has experienced the same problem. Acne is treatable and scar formation can thus be prevented.

### **What can you do?**

Blemished skin will disappear within a few years. Daily wash with water and soap is good, whereas oily skin care products should be avoided. Make-up can be used according to one's needs, but select the products designed for oily skin. Make-up must be removed before bedtime.

Avoid touching/ squeezing the pimples – it tends to make your acne worse.

Eat wisely. If you drink a lot of milk, especially the low-fat types, reducing the intake may improve your acne.

### **Treatment**

Blemished skin can be treated with over-the-counter preparations. You can find skin care products designed for oily and blemished skin at the pharmacy.

Acne is a skin disease which can be treated by your doctor or dermatologist. Every treatment requires patience, and it may take up to 6 months before the full effect of a treatment can be seen.

In some cases topical treatment alone is adequate, but often combined treatments with tablets (antibiotics) and creams will be considered. The tablets will ameliorate inflamed pimples, while creams mainly prevent the formation of comedones.

Some women can be treated with a special type of birth control pills.

In the most severe acne cases, both men and women can be treated with isotretinoin capsules which decrease the production of sebum in the skin. This treatment can only be prescribed by a dermatologist, and it requires careful monitoring including blood tests. The dermatologist will inform about the treatment and the precautions to be taken during treatment.

### **Sun**

The natural sun dries the skin and may therefore alleviate the problems, but the effect is not lasting. Solarium has no effect.

### **Pregnancy and breastfeeding**

During pregnancy, acne can improve spontaneously, but in many cases the problem will flare up after giving birth. Tablet treatment is not an option during pregnancy, but most local treatments can be considered.