

# THE ACNE MANAGEMENT GUIDE

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## About Dr. Ipsa Pandya

Dr. Ipsa Pandya is a board certified practising dermatologist in India. She has done her specialisation as an MD (Doctor of Medicine) in Dermatology and graduated with a gold medal. She has 8 years of experience in Clinical Dermatology and Cosmetology with a special interest in Acne and Hair loss.

Alongside clinical practice, she has been appointed as a Principal Investigator for various clinical trials most of which are of products for acne management and submitted to national and international regulatory bodies such as USFDA (United States Food & Drugs Association), EMA (European Medicines Agency) and DCGI (Drug Controller General of India).

After dealing with many acne cases over the years, she feels there are huge gaps in the understanding of acne as a lifestyle disorder. More importance is usually given to buying expensive products rather than making lifestyle changes. This inspired her to create an acne management guide which will help you gain better understanding of acne and lay down a solid foundation in the comprehensive management of acne.

It is important to note that the information provided in this guide is ONLY in the context of and meant for those with mild to moderate acne which are not painful, filled with pustules, nodular or cystic. Also, this guide is not a substitute for medical advice.

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**In the course of this guide, I have provided product recommendations which are available without a prescription and have included products of different price ranges to fit various budgets. I hope this guide provides insights in holistic management of acne which can make way for sustainable and long lasting results.**

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The content in this guide is created and compiled for informational purposes only. This information herein is NOT for use or application for those with severe acne that are painful, pus filled, modular or cystic. This information herein is NOT intended to be a substitute for medical advice or treatment. Always seek the advice of your dermatologist on any matters that may require medical attention. Reliance on any information provided herein is solely at your own risk and consequence.

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The products mentioned in this guide are based on my experience with patients through the years and I have no collaboration with any of the brands. The same are not to be construed as a prescription of any kind for whatsoever purpose. There is no monetary gain involved in mentioning the products

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# WHAT IS ACNE?

**Acne is a hair follicle that gets plugged with oil and dead cells.**

# TYPES OF ACNE



**BLACKHEADS**  
Open plugged pores



**WHITEHEADS**  
Closed plugged pores



**PAPULES**  
Small red bumps

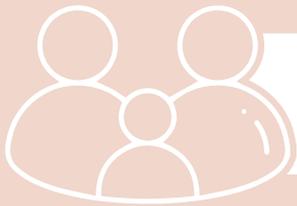


**PUSTULES**  
Painful red bumps  
with pus on top



**NODULES**  
Large solid painful lumps  
under the skin that  
form cysts when they  
get infected.

# COMMON CAUSES OF ACNE



**Familial tendency**



**Hormone imbalance**



**High glycemic index diet, Dairy**



**Nicotine**

# LESSER KNOWN CAUSES OF ACNE



**Dirty pillow covers  
and mobile screens**



**Using comedogenic  
products**



**Prolonged use  
of mask**



**Excessive washing /  
scrubbing of face**



**Using too many  
products at a time**



**Oily  
scalp**

**Ultimately all of these cause defects in the keratinisation of skin cells, increase oil production and growth of skin bacteria called Propionibacterium Acne, leading to formation of Acne.**

# DIET FOR ACNE PRONE SKIN

## Breakfast

Breakfast is the most important and should be the heaviest meal of your day. Skipping breakfast can cause low sugars and make you very hungry suddenly. You tend to eat more sugar rich food in such situations which then causes more acne.

For the skin to be at its best health and for responding well to acne treatment, you should be consuming 1g/kg body weight of protein everyday. Half of this amount of protein should be consumed in your breakfast. So make sure you have a high protein and low carb breakfast whenever possible.

Few examples :

A glass of milk / tea / coffee (try it with almond / soy milk) + a high protein source like egg / peanut butter toast / Besan chilla / muesli / Sauted mushrooms / baked beans on toast / idli / dosa / soya pancake.

## **Mid-morning Snack**

As mentioned before, being hungry for a long time will make you crave for sugary foods. So make sure you eat small frequent portions of food so that you don't crave for sweet food later.

Few examples:

A handful of peanuts / chana / Badaam + walnuts / cashews / pistachios, flax seeds and pumpkin seeds

## **Lunch**

Have a balanced lunch.

Dal, vegetable with rice or 2 rotis.

## **Evening Snack**

A bowl of fresh seasonal fruits.

## **Dinner**

Try and have a low carb dinner as much as possible. Have salads and soups as dinner. Pair them with different forms of bread if you have a carb craving but control portions of bread.

## **Bedtime**

One cup of green tea-Green tea has EGCG (epigallocatechin-3 gallate) which regulates the hormones causing acne and also helps in reducing oil production in the skin.

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# **LIFESTYLE CHANGES FOR ACNE PRONE SKIN**

## **Avoid Whey Protein Powders**

Whey protein is a by product of milk and therefore is also associated with acne. It's because whey protein increases the production of IGF-1, a hormone that again tends to increase your sebum production, thereby causing acne breakouts.

## **Sleep latest by 11 pm and wake up at 7 am**

Lack of sleep causes an increase in the stress hormone cortisol which then causes the oil glands to produce more oil and therefore increases acne.

## **Brisk walk for 20 mins daily. Always wash face with salicylic based cleanser after working out**

Being active and doing exercise helps in balancing the hormones and thus helps in preventing acne.

## **Clean mobile covers every week**

For the same reason as above. To prevent collection of bacteria on the cover and transfer onto the skin.

## **Always remove your makeup before sleeping**

Not removing makeup will further clog your pores and lead to acne formation.

## **Always remove your makeup before sleeping**

Cleansing your face more than required (3-4 times a day is good) will rip off the natural oils and make the skin tight and dry and signal the skin to produce more oil, causing acne.

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## SKINCARE ROUTINE FOR ACNE PRONE SKIN



### AM Routine



### Cleansing

#### Salicylic Acid-based cleansers:

Salicylic Acid, a beta hydroxy acid (BHA) is known to deep clean excess oil out of pores and reduce oil production. Because salicylic acid keeps pores clean and unclogged, it prevents future whiteheads and blackheads from developing and is therefore an excellent ingredient for a face wash.

#### Recommended Products:

- Ahaglow S face wash by Torrent pharma
- Keracnyl face wash by Ducray
- Bioderma Sebium face wash

### Glycolic Acid-based cleansers:

Glycolic acid based cleansers can be used by pregnant and lactating women having acne prone skin. Glycolic acid is an Alpha hydroxy acid (AHA) which acts as an exfoliant and removes dead cells.

### Recommended Products:

- Ahaglow face wash by Torrent pharma
- Liteglow face wash by Glenmark

## Active

### Salicylic Acid:

As mentioned before Salicylic acid is an excellent ingredient for oil control and therefore is a must in any skincare routine for acne-prone skin. Since salicylic acid does not have any effect with sun exposure, it is best to use in the morning.

### Recommended Products:

- Alpha beta acne gel- Fixderma cosmetic laboratories
- Sebozit gel by KLM Pharma

## Niacinamide:

Niacinamide is a molecule with multiple benefits. It regulates oil production, reduces inflammation/redness associated with acne and also helps lighten the dark spots left after acne. It is safe to use during pregnancy and lactation and is therefore the preferred active for treating acne in these conditions.

## Recommended Products:

- Niacinamide serum from DermaCo
- Niacinamide serum from Eclat

## Sunscreen:

Sunscreen is important for acne prone skin because most of the acne medications / applications make your skin sensitive to sunburn. The right sunscreen can give a mattifying effect and protect the skin without worsening breakouts. Sunscreen is to be applied once daily irrespective of whether you are indoors or outdoors. If you are going to be outdoors for a long time, re-apply the sunscreen every 2 hourly.

For acne prone skin, a gel or water based sunscreen is recommended to avoid clogging of pores and oiliness. Generally, chemical sunscreens are to be used unless recommended otherwise.

### **Recommended Products:**

- Suncote gel by Curatio pharma
- UV doux by Brinton Pharma

### **Physical Sunscreens:**

They are recommended to those with extreme sensitivity to sun, those with very high sun exposure on a daily basis, those with skin diseases which make their skin sensitive to sun, children, pregnant and lactating women.

### **Recommended Products:**

- La Shield Fisico by Glenmark
- Requil sheer zinc tinted sunscreen

## Sunscreen with Infrared Protection (IR):

For people with increased screen exposure , it is advised to use a sunscreen that gives protection against Infrared (IR) radiation in addition to protection against Ultraviolet (UV) radiation.

### Recommended Products:

- La Shield IR by Glenmark



## PM Routine



## Cleansing

Similar to the AM routine, use a salicylic acid based cleanser to wash your face. Additionally, when you wash your face at night, keep on the face wash for 4-5 minutes so that it will give an effect of a toner and unclog the oil/dirt collected in the pores that day. This will eliminate the need of using a separate toner.

# Moisturiser

Reasons why you should use a moisturiser if you have acne prone skin:

- They create a barrier and protect the skin from external factors like dirt, pollution etc.
- They compensate for the irritation caused by the actives used for treating acne.
- They also act as anti-ageing ingredients and prevent premature ageing of the skin.

Recommended Products:

- Acnemoist by Curatio Pharma
- Acmist moisturising gel by Brinton Pharma
- Acrofy gel by Dr Reddy's
- Bioderma Sebium Hydra

## Active

The mainstay for active in acne treatment that is available over the counter (OTC) is benzoyl peroxide. Benzoyl peroxide is supposed to be applied only as a spot treatment. After washing the face, take a pea sized amount of benzoyl peroxide and apply it gently on each active acne and a little bit around the skin surrounding the acne also. Apply it very gently and avoid rubbing at any cost. Benzoyl peroxide can cause burning and irritation for the initial few days. So dilute it with the moisturiser in a 1:1 ratio for 3-4 days till your skin gets used to it. Then you can start using it directly.

### Recommended Products:

- Benzac Ac 2.5% gel by Galderma
- Person Ac 2.5% gel by Wallace Pharma

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# COMMON MISTAKES MADE IN ACNE TREATMENT

## Using too many products at one time

Even though you may be using the correct products, when you use many products together at the same time, they tend to interact with each other and may cause side effects. So avoid this very common mistake.

## Using face scrubs

Scrubs tend to irritate the skin and cause more acne.

## Excessive washing of face

As mentioned before, washing the face too many times will remove the natural oils and make the skin more dry causing it to produce more oil.

## **Not using a moisturiser thinking it will make your skin oily**

The benefits of using a moisturiser have been highlighted before. You just need to use the correct moisturiser that suits your skin.

## **Using Aloe Vera**

Aloe Vera can benefit in acne but it can also cause major side effects like rashes and wheals. It is better to avoid it because of risks weighing over the benefits

## **Skipping breakfast**

Skipping breakfast can cause imbalance in the IGF levels (the hormone that causes acne) and trigger acne.

## **Skipping sunscreen**

Skipping sunscreen will make your skin more sensitive to sun if you are undergoing acne treatment. This will lead to side effects like sunburn.

## **Picking on acne**

Picking on acne or scratching them will lead to darker spots which will take a long time in fading off.

## **Not treating acne on time and waiting too long to treat it**

Waiting too long to treat acne will cause development of acne scars (pits) and acne marks (red/brown) spots that are left after acne. These post acne complications are more difficult and expensive to treat than acne itself.

## **Rubbing / Massaging actives**

No skin cream/ointment is meant to be rubbed or massaged onto the skin. This will lead to side effects like redness, burning and itching.

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## ACNE FAQs

### When will my acne get treated?

Acne treatment takes around 3-6 months on average and then we shift to maintenance phase which includes using a skin care routine to control oil and prevent acne.

This 3-6 month phase can be broken down into 2-3 months to treat active acne and 2-3 months to treat acne marks.

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### Will my acne be treated permanently?

Acne is not a disease that can be cured. It is how a particular skin tends to respond to hormones, diet, stress, products etc. So it is not realistic to expect the acne to be treated permanently. What you can expect with acne treatment when you consult me or any other dermatologist is that your flare up will be controlled, the marks will lighten, you will also be given a skincare routine to prevent acne and a spot treatment to clear acne whenever they occur. This is important to prevent complications like scars and cysts.

## **Will there be any side effects of the acne treatment?**

If you search the internet, it will show you side effects of any medicine. A medicine as simple as paracetamol (used for fever) might also have side effects. Therefore it is necessary to consult a qualified dermatologist for your acne concerns so that the side effects can be minimised and you can get better results. Any acne treatment will usually make your skin dry and more sensitive to sunlight. This is temporary. However, it is very important to moisturise your skin frequently and use a sunscreen everyday irrespective of whether you are going out in the sun or not.

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## **Is acne linked with digestion problems?**

Research has proved that the disturbance in the gut flora can cause acne. So it can be helpful to treat your digestive issues along with treating your acne to get optimum results.

## **Will my acne return back after the treatment?**

As mentioned before, recurrence of acne will depend on many factors of your lifestyle and hormones. A disturbance in hormones, diet, skincare routine, weather and pollution can cause an exacerbation acne.

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## **Is it necessary to undergo clinical procedures for acne/acne marks, acne scars?**

Acne marks are the reddish/brownish/blackish spots that are left after acne. These spots are possible to be treated without any procedures with the help of creams, serums and home based peels. So it is not absolutely necessary to undergo in-clinic procedures for them. The only advantage of in-clinic treatments will be it will show results faster than those that you get with home treatment. Acne scars are those pits/depressions that are left after big red acne. These cannot be treated by any creams / ointments and require in-clinic treatments only. These treatments will give you anywhere between 40-70 % results.

# KEEP IN TOUCH



**You can follow me on my Instagram account  
for skin and hair care tips**



**dripsapandya**

**You can book a private consultation with me  
for your skin / hair issues through the following link**



**Calendly.com/dripsapandya**