



# Lifestyle Choices That Can Affect Acne

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Below are some lifestyle choices that can have an impact on your skin and your journey towards clear skin.

- **Rest and Stress**  
Get enough rest and reduce your stress. Stress stimulates the adrenal gland which promotes oil production that can lead to clogged pores in the acne-prone individual.
- **Fabric Softener**  
Fabric softeners (liquid or dryer sheets) leave a waxy residue on pillowcases, towels, wash cloths, sheets, and any other fabric comes into direct contact with the skin. This residue can clog pores of acne-prone individuals. You can use anti-static dryer balls to reduce static cling.
- **Detergent**  
Detergents with fragrance can cause skin irritation. Fragrance-free detergents are a better choice. Remember to check the ingredient list of the detergent you choose and against Face Reality's Pore-Clogging Ingredients handout.
- **Pillowcases**  
It is good practice to change your pillowcases often. Oil and other products (such as hair care) can leave build up and contribute to clogged pores.
- **Water Softeners**  
There is some evidence that water softeners can lead to acne, especially those containing high amounts of potassium chloride.
- **Swimmers**  
Swimming pool disinfectants contain iodides and chlorine which can remain in the water, causing skin problems for frequent swimmers. Consider applying a thin layer of petroleum jelly over your sunscreen before you get into the pool.
- **Sun Exposure and Acne**  
Although sun exposure causes desirable scaling and drying, it also damages the follicle, exacerbates dark spots, and causes skin cancer and premature aging. Always wear sunscreen, even if it's overcast and/or raining.
- **Beware of Hand Lotions**  
If you are using a pore-clogging (comedogenic) hand lotion then leaning your face on your hands or sleeping on your hands, this could exacerbate your acne.
- **Breakouts Around the Mouth Area**  
Many lip balms, toothpastes, and even facial tissues have comedogenic ingredients in them. If you see breakouts around your mouth area, one of these products may be the culprit. We recommend petroleum jelly as a lip balm and toothpaste without SLS (sodium lauryl sulfate). Many well-known tissue brands are infused with things like coconut oil, isopropyl myristate, and SLS, all of which will clog the pores.

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- **Resist Picking or Squeezing**

Rub ice on pustules and pimples for a couple of minutes, twice a day.

IMPORTANT: if you pick, squeeze, and break the skin, that scab will leave a red or dark mark that will be there for months longer than if you left it alone.

- **Birth Control and Hormone Replacement**

Forms of birth control that contain low doses of estrogen can be higher in androgen hormones, and that combination may aggravate acne-prone skin. Certain forms of birth control are FDA approved to treat acne. Please speak with your doctor about the birth control method that will be best for you. You should also familiarize yourself with the benefits and risks of any birth control. Please see the Birth Control And Acne Simplified handout for more detailed information.

Progesterone hormone replacements may exacerbate acne. If you have Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome, it can cause hormonal changes and breakouts.

- **Prescription Drugs**

Prescription drugs that may exacerbate acne include some topical and oral steroids, anticonvulsants, thyroid medications, fertility drugs, Isoniazid, Imuran, Danazol, Gonadotrophin, Cyclosporin, Disulfiram, and drugs that treat ADD/ADHD.

Other topical prescription drugs that must be discontinued at least 14 days prior to receiving a treatment or starting Face Reality Skincare active products include Azelex, Finacea, Retin-A, Tazorac, Differin, Clindamycin (Cleocin-T), Erythromycin (Erygel), Dapsone (Aczone). This includes any topical treatment from Proactiv or Curology, that is not benzoyl peroxide only.

If you are taking oral Isotretinoin consult your Acne Expert for guidance on how long you must wait after discontinuing use prior to starting treatments and active products.

- **Recreational drugs**

Recreational drugs that may exacerbate acne include marijuana, cocaine, and amphetamines (speed).

- **Chemicals**

Coal tars (roofers), grease (mechanics, cooks, waiters), chlorinated industrial chemicals, and dioxin can exacerbate acne.

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