

Acne: Brief Version

What is acne?

Acne is a skin problem. It happens when the skin pores get clogged with oil, which causes pimples.

What is the cause?

Most teenagers get acne. During these years, hormones cause more body hair to grow and the skin to get oilier. The skin pores (where the hairs grow out) sometimes get clogged with oil and bacteria.

What are the symptoms?

You may have:

- Blackheads (plugged oil glands with black tips)
- Whiteheads (pimples)
- Red bumps called cysts that may hurt or be filled with pus

How is it treated?

Your healthcare provider may give you:

- Soaps to clean your face gently
- Gel to dry up the acne
- Lotion or gel with an antibiotic in it to put on your skin in the places where you get acne
- Skin creams with Retin-A to prevent pimples
- Antibiotic pills

If you are a woman, your provider may prescribe birth control pills, which can help you have less acne.

Your provider may inject large cysts with medicine. This will help keep you from getting scars.

For very bad cases, your provider may give you a medicine called isotretinoin. Women must be careful when taking this medicine. **If you are pregnant or may become pregnant, do not take isotretinoin. It can hurt the baby if you take it while you are pregnant or even if you took it a month or 2 before you got pregnant.**

How can I take care of myself?

Follow your healthcare provider's advice. It's also a good idea to:

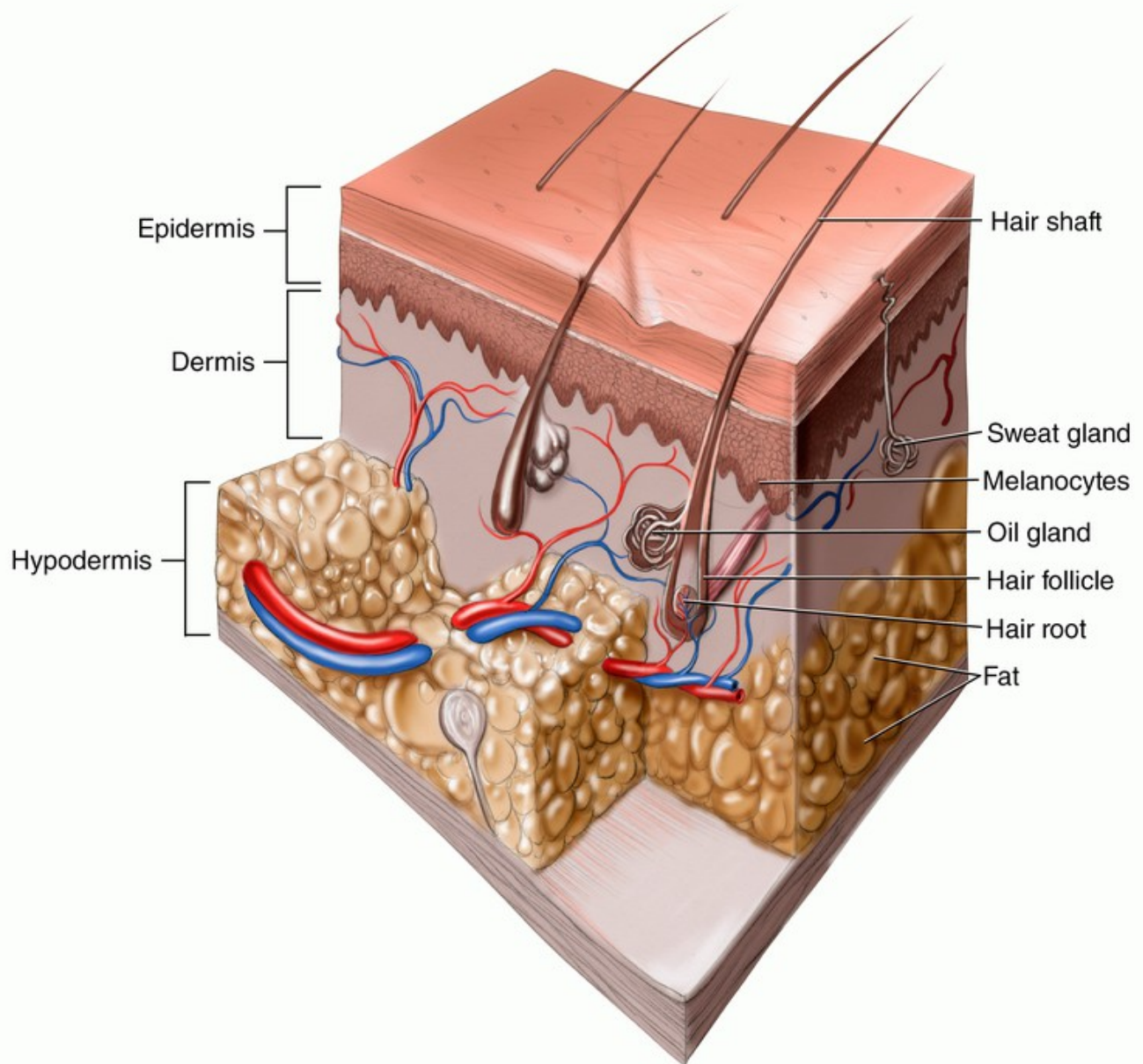
- Wash your face gently 1 to 2 times a day with a mild soap. Clean your hands and use your fingers to wash your face rather than a washcloth. Wash your face as soon as you can after you exercise.

- Change the washcloth that you use on your body every day. Bacteria can grow on damp cloth and can be spread to your face.
- Keep your hands away from your face as much as possible. Don't squeeze, pick, scratch, or rub your pimples. You may spread infection and get scars.
- Shampoo your hair at least twice a week. Keep your hair away from your face during the day and at night while you sleep.
- If certain foods seem to make your acne worse, don't eat those foods.
- Try not to work in hot kitchens where greasy foods are cooked.
- Try not to get sunburned.
- Try not to get stressed. Take some quiet time and get exercise. It might help to talk to a counselor.
- Keep your follow-up appointments with your healthcare provider. Keep a record of the medicines you have tried. Write down if they have worked. Let your provider know if your medicine isn't working. Don't give up. Keep working with your provider until you find a way to keep your skin clear.

Developed by RelayHealth.

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Skin: Cross Section



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