



Why Dermatologists Recommend Treating Acne

Acne can last a long time: Teenagers who have acne can expect breakouts throughout their 20s and beyond. When left untreated, acne can worsen over time, potentially diminishing the sufferer's self-esteem and causing acne scars.

The good news is that acne can be treated. The first step is to identify the type of acne you have. See the inside of this brochure to learn about different types of acne.



What Is Acne?

Acne is a skin condition that can cause blackheads, whiteheads, pimples, and acne cysts or nodules. Acne is not contagious, and today, virtually anyone who has acne can get clearer skin through treatment.

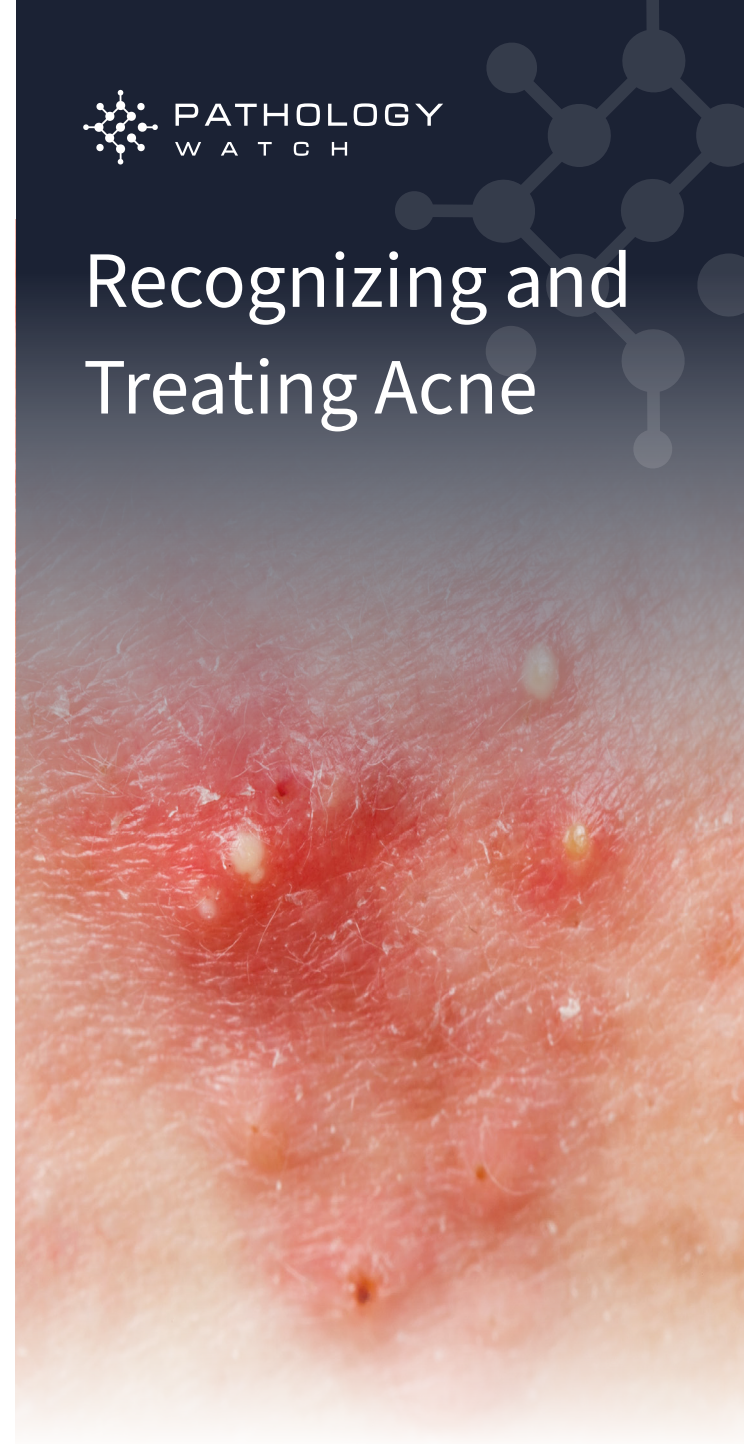


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Recognizing and Treating Acne



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Types of Acne

All types of acne are formed from excess oil and dead skin cells accumulating in a pore. Here's how the four types of acne differ:



A **whitehead** is a raised blemish that is white or flesh-colored. Whiteheads develop when excess oil and dead skin cells build up and plug the opening of a pore.

As a buildup of oil and dead skin cells accumulates, this widens the opening of the pore, creating a **blackhead**. The dark color is a chemical reaction of the buildup reacting with oxygen in the air.



When trapped inside a pore with excess oil and dead skin cells, bacteria can multiply quickly. As the pore fills with bacteria, swelling develops, causing a **pimple**.

When this swelling goes deep into the skin, an **acne nodule or cyst** develops. Because these breakouts go deep into the skin, they can feel tender or painful. Cysts contain pus; nodules don't.



The Science of Acne Control

It's important to use the right acne treatment for each type of blemish you have. Blackheads and whiteheads, for example, require treatment that unclogs pores. Over-the-counter medication that contains adapalene helps with that.

Acne nodules or cysts require treatment that works on clogged pores and excess oil as well as bacteria and inflammation. A dermatologist can help with that.

For any type of acne breakout, the following tips can help:

- **Stick to a gentle skincare routine; don't scrub at or pop your blemishes. This irritates the skin and leads to more breakouts.**
- **Avoid products that will clog your pores. Look for products that are labeled "oil-free," "noncomedogenic," or "won't clog pores."**
- **Be patient. It takes six to nine weeks of using the same treatment to see improvement.**



Adult Acne

Do adults get acne? Yes, and they may find their breakouts are less responsive to treatment that worked well on their acne as a teen. Adult acne is usually caused by one of the following triggers:

Fluctuating hormone levels: Women often experience fluctuating hormones around their periods; during pregnancy, perimenopause, and menopause; or after starting or discontinuing birth control pills.

Stress: When we're stressed, our bodies produce more androgens, i.e., hormones that stimulate the oil glands and hair follicles in the skin. This stimulation can lead to acne.

Family history: People with a genetic predisposition for acne may be more likely to get it as an adult.

Medication side effect: Some medications can cause acne. Talk to the prescribing doctor to see if you are able to take a different medication. If not, a dermatologist can help you control the acne.

Undiagnosed medical condition: Some medical conditions can cause acne. The acne often clears once the condition is diagnosed and treated.

Virtually every case of acne can be controlled. If over-the-counter treatments aren't working, a dermatologist can help. With time and one or two treatments, your acne will likely clear up.