

Myths about acne***Acne is caused by a poor diet.***

False. Diet does not generally affect acne, although many people think that chocolate makes their acne worse. Some evidence suggests that dairy products and high glycaemic index foods aggravate acne (but don't cause it). If you think certain foods make your acne worse, avoid them.

Acne is caused by a hormone imbalance.

Most people with acne have normal hormone levels, but their skin is more sensitive to the hormones. In a minority of people (eg people with polycystic ovary syndrome [PCOS]), acne is related to a hormone imbalance.

Acne is caused by poor hygiene.

False. Although general hygiene (eg daily face-washing) can help manage acne, acne is not caused by poor hygiene, and washing too much can make it worse. Oily skin is genetic, and not because you don't wash enough.

All teenagers have acne, so it doesn't matter.

50% of teenagers have acne, and it does matter a lot to them. No-one wants to look in the mirror and see spots, and even if your friends have acne too, this doesn't make it easier.

Truths about acne

Acne is common.

Acne can start from the age of 8 years.

Acne can cause embarrassment, anxiety, social withdrawal and depression.

Oily skincare products and cosmetics make acne worse.

Saunas make acne worse.

Some people don't 'grow out' of acne.

Acne can cause permanent scarring.

Acne can be controlled with medication.

How to treat acne

Use your prescribed treatment every day, unless directed otherwise.

Apply creams to the whole affected area, not just to the spots.

Use water-based or oil-free cosmetics and sunscreens.

Use a light moisturiser.

Try not to pick and squeeze the spots, because this causes scabs that make the skin look worse and may increase likelihood of scarring.

Be patient—most treatments take at least 6 to 12 weeks to work.

Doctor's contact details: