

Acne Mechanica Treatment Guidelines

Prevention

All cases

- Wear breathable clothing materials such as cotton
 - Wash clothing, athletic equipment and sports clothing after use to avoid bacteria build-up
 - Shower and change out of used clothing immediately after exercise
 - avoid wearing the same clothing for long periods, especially when sweating
 - Limit sun exposure
 - Avoid touching your face or wash your hands before touching your face
 - Protect acne-prone skin from tight or restrictive clothing or sports gear like helmet straps
 - If possible, cease using the equipment or clothing item causing irritation as soon as small rough bumps and redness first appear. This mild initial form of acne mechanica is easier to treat than later more severe symptoms.
 - Avoid skincare products or soaps containing irritants or fragrances
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Topical treatments

Mild to moderate cases

- **Gentle soaps:** Fragrances and other harsh chemicals can make acne flare-ups worse. Use only gentle soaps and cleansers to keep the skin clean, but don't overdo it. Problem areas should only be washed once or twice per day.
- **Benzoyl peroxide:** Benzoyl peroxide is a common ingredient in acne treatments because it acts as a deep cleanser to remove dead skin and keep bacteria at bay. Benzoyl peroxide products can vary in strength, so it's usually recommended to start with lower strength first.
- **Hydroxy acids:** Alpha-hydroxy acids and beta-hydroxy acids are both commonly used in skin care. However, salicylic acid is the most common beta-hydroxy acid used for acne. Like benzoyl peroxide, it's best to start at a lower concentration unless a higher prescription is recommended.
- **Antibiotics:** Topical antibiotics, such as triclosan, may be used in cases where bacteria are suspected to be present with acne mechanica. Topical antibiotics are almost always prescribed with other medications rather than on their own.
- **Vitamins:** Topical vitamins, such as retinoids and nicotinamide, can be used to reduce inflammation and promote the growth of new skin. These products are available as both prescription and over-the-counter options.
- **Retinoid:** A retinoid applied to the skin works to clear pores and can treat blackheads, whiteheads, and some pimples. If dark spots develop after acne clears, a retinoid can help lighten these spots.

Prescription treatments

Severe cases

- **Tretinoin:** Tretinoin is a topical retinoid that helps to clear pores, reduce acne lesions, and improve skin texture. It works by promoting skin cell turnover, which can prevent new breakouts from forming.
 - **Isotretinoin:** Isotretinoin is an oral medication used to treat severe, cystic acne that has not responded to other treatments. It works by reducing oil production in the skin, preventing clogged pores, and reducing inflammation. Due to its potency, it is typically prescribed for long-term use under close medical supervision.
 - **Oral antibiotics:** Certain antibiotics, such as doxycycline and erythromycin, can reduce the amount of *P. acnes* bacteria on the skin and lessen inflammation. As a result, acne may decrease and sometimes clear up. It is important to follow the prescribed duration for these antibiotics to ensure effectiveness and prevent the development of antibiotic resistance.
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Other treatment options

- **Corticosteroid injection:** To relieve the swelling and pain caused by a large, painful acne breakout, a dermatologist may inject a corticosteroid medication into the breakout. This treatment can also reduce the risk of developing acne scars. While effective, dermatologists reserve this procedure for treating a few severe breakouts, as it is not recommended to use it more than a few times.
 - **Chemical peel:** When applied to acne, a chemical peel helps remove dead skin cells clogging the pores and excess oil, which can help clear acne.
 - **Laser or light treatments:** Laser or light-based therapy may be part of a treatment plan for mild-to-moderate acne
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References

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