When Should You See a Doctor for Acne?

Acne is incredibly common. At least 85% of people between the ages of 12 and 24 report having at least minor bouts of acne. So it makes sense that there are many over-the-counter medications and at-home treatments available to combat it. While it might be overwhelming to navigate the options on your pharmacy’s shelves, it’s good to have several solutions available.

However, with so many treatment options, how do you know when it’s time to see a physician about your acne? The answer might be different for everyone. This article will help you know when it might be time to talk with a doctor about getting your acne treated.
When Over-the-Counter Treatments Don’t Work

You can try at-home acne remedies before going to see a dermatologist. Many of them have proven to be effective, especially when dealing with early-stage acne or when skin conditions aren’t severe. You can also pick up basic anti-acne creams and washes at your local drugstore.

If over-the-counter treatments aren’t enough, consider seeing a doctor for stronger medication or a personalized acne treatment plan. You’ll need a prescription for such medications. A visit to the doctor will determine what you need and whether you should adjust habits, such as your diet.

Another sign that you should consult with a doctor is if acne becomes worse after using an OTC product. A reaction to any type of medication should be taken seriously. Your doctor can help you change your prescription or recommend a treatment option that will work better for you.

When Scarring Starts to Occur

While acne is temporary, scarring can last forever. At that point, there’s little you can do to get scarring to fade or go away. Scars act as painful reminders of the acne you dealt with and can be equally as embarrassing to carry around.

Acne forms these scars while your body is trying to repair skin damage. When damage occurs, it takes longer for your skin to recover. Tissue can be permanently damaged as it heals incorrectly.

If it looks like there’s even some slight scarring or discoloration of your skin left by pimples, consult with your doctor. They’ll be able to help you manage the existing scarring. They can also give you tips for reducing the chances
of scarring with future breakouts. If you act too late, some damage may have already been done.

**When Signs of Cystic Acne Appear**

If your acne is causing you physical pain, you might have **cystic acne**. This occurs when your pores get excessively blocked and irritated, creating miniature cysts in your skin. This form of acne is much more difficult to treat and likely won’t respond well to over-the-counter treatments.

The hardest thing to do is avoid popping or picking at the cysts or nodules forming in your skin. When they become this large and painful, they’re more likely to leave scars when popped. Cystic acne causes more skin damage than regular acne by leaving large openings for additional bacteria to enter. Let your dermatologist take a look at your condition to determine the best course of treatment.

**When Mental Health Becomes a Concern**

While your physical health is obviously a concern, your mental health should also be on your radar as you deal with acne. It’s no secret that you feel good when you look good. Consequently, many individuals get down in the dumps over acne problems.

If you feel embarrassed when you’re out in public or feel ashamed by how you look, talk with a doctor about acne solutions. Their knowledge and expertise can help you overcome your acne. They can also provide a support system to help you through the process of addressing your skin concerns.

Remember that you have a lot more worth than what your skin condition might currently reflect. Even as acne medication starts to work its magic, you may not feel your best. Consider
speaking with a doctor or counselor about any feelings of depression or anxiety. While acne might not be the end of the world, it certainly can affect your mental health and self-confidence.

When Acne Appears After Taking Other Medication

Sometimes, acne can be a result of taking something you need to cure another medical issue. Some types of medication can actually cause acne as one of their side effects. Medicine that can cause acne includes various antidepressants, B vitamins, and anabolic steroids.

If acne starts to pop up after you begin taking a new medication, schedule a visit with your physician. This way, you can better understand the cause of your acne. They’ll help you determine whether the medication is the cause or your new acne is nothing but a coincidence.

If your medication is causing acne, doctors can direct you to an alternative prescription or add some acne medication that won’t interfere. Following the doctor’s advice is more beneficial than using trial and error to try to solve the problem on your own.

When Parents Have a History of Acne

Acne is not necessarily hereditary. Just because one or both of your parents had acne as teens doesn’t mean you’re guaranteed to get it. However, there are certain genetic traits that can influence whether or not you get acne. For example, the way your body regulates hormones or your immune system fights off bacteria can affect your overall skin condition.

If you haven’t had bad acne yet but both of your parents have
a history of problems, talk to your doctor. They can help you
determine the likelihood of experiencing similar problems.
There are some medications and techniques you can employ to
prevent severe acne that your doctor can walk you through.

Don’t let acne control your life, especially since there are
many options available for controlling it. One quick visit to
your doctor or dermatologist won’t be expensive. Getting a
treatment plan in place can put you on the right track for
controlling your skin issues. You’ll thank yourself down the
road when skin problems are no longer a concern for you.