

Help Your Teenager Fight Acne

Sensitive Solutions For Parents Of Teens With Acne

(NAPSA)—Your teenager is not alone in the fight against pimples. Acne is the most common skin disorder, affecting an estimated 40-50 million Americans. While pimples affect people of all ages, from teens to adults in their 50s, the most common sufferers are adolescents.

Any teenager who struggles with the affliction of acne also is probably experiencing the emotional stress and low self-esteem often associated with this skin disorder. With a few simple tips, parents can learn how to sensitively identify and address the problem, providing effective solutions to help their teenager fight acne on both the physical and psychological levels.

What You Need To Know About Acne

The first step to finding a solution is being able to identify the severity of the problem. The most common form of acne is mild-to-moderate inflammatory acne vulgaris, commonly called zits, pimples, breakouts or blemishes. These conditions result when a skin pore clogs, allowing p.acnes bacteria to thrive and ultimately creating the small red inflammation that appears as a pimple. There also are more serious levels of acne, such as severe acne vulgaris, acne rosacea or acne conglobata, which are more difficult to clear and can have long-lasting effects.

The type of treatment can vary greatly depending on acne type, from simple daily cleansing to preventing the occasional pimple to visiting a dermatologist for the most severe types of acne. But in all cases, it is important to remember that no matter how good a preventative regimen is, pimples can still break through and acne is likely to affect a teenager's self-esteem



A new handheld medical device can neutralize the bacteria that causes pimples.

and confidence. As a parent, it's important to be supportive and reassure that this condition will likely pass.

New Jersey-based board-certified dermatologist Dr. Jeanine Downie recommends these tips for sensitively talking to your teenager about acne:

1. Pick a time when your teenager is in a comfortable, private place, such as on the way home from school in the car.
2. Avoid talking to them when pimples are especially bad, as his/her self-esteem may be fragile.
3. Approach the conversation by asking questions rather than making statements. For example, rather than saying "I'm worried about your skin," ask "Do you feel frustrated by your skin sometimes?" Then, tell them about your experiences with acne as a teen so they truly know you understand.
4. Do your research and bring new solutions that they haven't tried.

Treatment Options: Tried & True and Cutting Edge

There are many treatment options for acne. Choosing the best solution depends on the severity of the blemishes and can combine a

variety of different solutions.

- The tried-and-true methods of fighting acne focus on prevention. These include washing skin with a gentle cleanser twice daily and the possible use of acne creams or lotions. These creams and lotions generally take six to eight weeks to work and typically contain one of two active ingredients designed to fight the outbreak of new acne—benzoyl peroxide or salicylic acid. Each works in a different manner: Benzoyl peroxide reduces p.acnes bacteria and removes dead skin cells, while salicylic acid helps correct the abnormal shedding of skin cells. Both products may have side effects, including excessive drying and/or irritation of the skin.

- Unfortunately, no matter how good your preventative regimen may be, pimples can still break through. When that happens, there also are new cutting-edge options such as spot treatment devices. Spot treatment devices are designed to clear pimples after they appear. One of the newest products on the market is ThermoClear (www.thermaclear.com). ThermoClear is an FDA-cleared, handheld medical device, sold over the counter, that delivers a controlled burst of heat that penetrates below the skin's surface to neutralize the bacteria that causes pimples. A clinical study proves that ThermoClear clears acne pimples two to four times faster than those not treated with ThermoClear.

For more-severe acne cases, you may benefit from visiting a dermatologist who can offer stronger solutions, such as antibiotic treatments or in-office laser treatments, available only under a doctor's care.

For more information on acne, visit the American Academy of Dermatology at www.aad.org.