

Why am I getting Acne and What Can I do?

Acne can happen to anyone from infancy to the golden years, but it is most common in the teen years and again during “middle age”.

Basically, acne happens because, due to hormone changes / stress / unknown factors, the skin cells get “sticky”. They do not fall off of the skin in the acne prone areas the way that normal skin does in the non-acne prone areas. So, the sticky skin forms a “biofilm” over the tops of the pores.

Each pore is actually an opening in the skin where a sebaceous gland excretes its oils, so when there are skin cells clogging the top, the oil “backs up”. If the clog is only halfway blocking the oil excretion, so some oil gets out and some doesn’t, then you get a little bump (whitehead or blackhead, also called closed or open comedones). If it is a pretty tight clog, enough oil backs up that it becomes a space-filling lesion in the skin. This is irritating to the immune system, so the immune system sends white blood cells in to investigate the problem. This causes inflammation and that translates as a red, tender, swollen bump.

Topical retinoids (such as adapalene / Differin, tretinoin / Retin-A, and tazarotene /Tazorac) teach the skin to fall off normally to prevent acne in the first place, and oral antibiotics decrease inflammation in the skin, making the swelling/redness/pain better and the bump smaller.

There is a type of bacteria found in acne lesions

and on acne prone skin in general called *Propionibacterium acnes*. Benzoyl peroxide (BPO) tends to kill it and topical and oral antibiotics may or may not kill it, but it is generally felt to be less important in causing acne than the sticky skin clogs are. When we treat with topical BPO or topical antibiotics alone, we often still see acne, whereas topical retinoids alone (which don’t kill this bacteria), can completely get rid of acne. So it is usually felt that the bacteria probably add to the overall inflammation but are not the central factor causing acne.



There are lots of treatments for acne, but a mainstay of therapy is the topical retinoid (like Differin, Retin-A, or Tazorac). Topical retinoids are meant to help that “biofilm” release and stop the clogging of the pores. The problem with the topical retinoids peeling the skin off is that, in the beginning, there is a LOT of dead skin to peel off, and it is irritating to your skin as it peels off. So in the beginning when you are using the retinoid, you get dry flaking burning skin. You can decrease this several ways:

If you just have small flesh colored bumps (comedones / whiteheads / blackheads), then I often start with topical retinoids twice a week and

(cont.)

slowly increase to nightly use over 3-6 months. I will often add a topical benzoyl peroxide to spot treat the bigger lesions since the topical retinoids are for prevention only (not for spot treating).

First, I usually tell my patients to start the topical retinoid two nights a week (let's say Monday and Thursday night). Use a small amount for the whole face (a dot on the forehead, each cheek, nose, and chin). More is not better, more just makes more side effects. Your skin will feel dry and tight the day after you put it on (Tuesday and Friday). After 2-4 weeks, you will notice that you aren't dry on Tues and Fri. That's when your skin is ready to add another day (let's say Monday and Wednesday and Friday). You will repeat the process over 3-6 months and will eventually be able to tolerate nightly use of the medication, which is when it works best.



Other ways to make the retinoid less irritating

- Use a moisturizer BEFORE you apply the retinoid. This ends up with slower / less delivery of the med to the skin so there's less irritation.
- Use a "night cream" on the Tues/Fridays when you are super dry (usually too oily to do every day).
- Wait an hour after washing the face to put on the retinoid. This is basically impossible to do in reality because waiting that long means you usually forget to put it on entirely, but when the face is damp with water, it is better at absorbing the retinoid, so it is stronger.

If a patient just cannot tolerate the topical retinoids or needs more than just the retinoid, I try other topical

medications meant to control inflammation such as topical azelaic acid, metronidazole, erythromycin gel or dapsone gel, or combinations of these, sometimes along with systemic medications like antibiotics, hormonal medications, isotretinoin, or laser treatments. These will be covered in future newsletters, so stay tuned! If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to schedule an appointment.

-Jennifer Rivard, M.D

Update on Our Location

As you may be aware, I have been practicing for over 30 years in Grosse Pointe Farms and I want to thank you for being my loyal support over the years. To continue to provide you with the best dermatological care available, I have joined Hamzavi Dermatology and my office will now be called Hamzavi Dermatology Grosse Pointe. I will continue to practice at the same location continuing my schedule; while also providing cosmetic procedures such as Botox and Juvederm. The relationship with Hamzavi has brought a new state of the art practice management and electronic medical record system that will enable us to efficiently see your patients and assist in communicating with you and your office.

I will be joined by Meredith, Price, M.D., who has multiple years of Dermatology experience and currently works at our affiliate locations, Hamzavi Dermatology Clinton Township and Fort Gratiot offices. She specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of acne, psoriasis, eczema, contact and occupational dermatitis, contact allergy testing, pediatric dermatology, hives, pruritus, autoimmune and blistering skin conditions, warts, skin cancer screening and treatment, mole mapping, hair loss and nail disease. She also performs surgical excisions for skin cancer treatment, and cosmetic dermatology, including Botox, fillers, chemical peels, laser treatments and other forms of skin

(cont.)

rejuvenation. We are excited to have her join our growing practice. She looks forward to meeting and treating you at the Grosse Pointe Office.

Our practice covers many elements of dermatology, including medical, pediatric, cosmetic and surgical. We offer MOHS surgery and Narrow Band UVB Phototherapy and Excimer laser at our nearby affiliate locations. We enjoy building therapeutic relationships with the entire family to ensure healthy skin for all ages. We offer same day appointments with evenings and some Saturday availability for your convenience. Our office accepts most major insurances.

As healthcare providers, it is our priority to ensure prompt patient care. Between the two of us, we are available to meet your medical, surgical and cosmetic dermatological needs. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us.

I thank you for your support, loyalty and patience during this transition.

Sincerely,
Nora Maya Kachaturoff, MD

Botox Special

Dr. Kachaturoff is part of brilliant distinction program for botox. We are running a new pricing of \$12/unit for Botox. Please call our Grosse Pointe Office to schedule a consultation and Dr. Kachaturoff or Dr. Price would be happy to provide this treatment.

If you want to stretch your dollar a little further for botox, visit this site and register to make your dollars go further. brilliantdistinctionsprogram.com

Highly Skilled Physicians | Top Quality Care

Whatever your skin care need, call us today to set up an appointment! Same day appointments are available.

- Pediatric & Adult Dermatology
- Laser Therapy
- Photodynamic Therapy (PDT)
- Skin Cancer
- Removal of Skin Cancer, Warts and Scars
- Phototherapy
- Eczema
- Psoriasis
- Vitiligo

Hamzavi Dermatology Fort Gratiot

2950 Keewahdin Rd. | Fort Gratiot, MI 48059
(810) 455-1600

S. L. Husain Hamzavi, M.D.
Fasahat Hamzavi, M.D.
Iltefat Hamzavi, M.D.
Meredith Price, M.D.
Jennifer Marlin P.A.-C.
Ashley Carriveau, M.S., P.A.-C.
Jessica McLeod, M.S.N., FNP-BC.

Dermatology Specialists of Shelby

50505 Schoenherr Rd., Suite 325
Shelby Township, MI 48315 | (586) 580-1001

Ali A. Berry, M.D.
Matteo C. LoPiccolo, M.D.
Judy Fontana, M.D.
Andrea Rosik, M.S., P.A.-C.

Hamzavi Dermatology Clinton Twp.

43151 Dalcoma, Suite 1 | Clinton Township, MI 48038
(586) 286-8720

S. L. Husain Hamzavi, M.D.
Meredith Price, M.D.
Jennifer Rivard, M.D.
Jessica McLeod, M.S.N., FNP-BC.

Dermatology Specialists of Brighton

2305 Genoa Business Park Dr., Suite 180
Brighton, MI 48114 | (810) 355-4300

Andrea Schrieber, M.D.
Francisca Kartono, D.O.
Matteo C. LoPiccolo, M.D.
Jennifer Rivard, M.D.
Jennifer M. Reiss, M.S., P.A.-C.

Dermatology Specialists of Canton

285 Lilley Rd. | Canton, MI 48187 | (734) 495-1506

Ali A. Berry, M.D.
Iltefat Hamzavi, M.D.
Andrea Schrieber, M.D.
Francisca Kartono, D.O.
Marsha Henderson, M.D.
Matteo C. LoPiccolo, M.D.
Evelyn Sommariva, M.S.P.A.-C.
Ann Ammond LaFond, M.D.
Kimberly Simons, M.S., P.A.-C.

Hamzavi Canton Dermatology

8584 N Canton Center Rd. | Canton, MI 48187
(734) 455-8180

David Blum, M.D.
Marsha Henderson, M.D.

Hamzavi Grosse Pointe Dermatology

18400 Mack Ave | Grosse Pointe, MI 48236
(313) 885-1930

Nora Maya Kachaturoff, M.D.
Meredith Price, M.D.