



ACNE ADVICE FROM REAL PEOPLE

Acne Treatment & Prevention Handout, ages 11-13

1. “When I was younger, the hardest part about dealing with acne for me was that I did not follow the advice of others who told me not to touch my acne. I constantly popped zits, scratched off scabs, and squeezed blackheads. Every time it made matters worse. I would have huge scabs that took what seemed like forever to heal, and a small blemish would end up taking over my entire chin by the time I was done attempting to ‘make it go away.’ My advice is to use a facial product that works for you.”

2. “I am female and have had acne since I was about 12. I am now about to turn 26. In terms of management, I have tried every single product from low, mid, and high-end cosmetics stores, all types of lotions and potions prescribed by doctors, and even a very expensive laser treatment by a dermatologist. Every single time, the acne came back.

More importantly, however, is the attitude I have developed in coping with the reality that I am someone who will have to deal with this, potentially for my whole life. The best tip I could ever give is, whenever possible and you feel comfortable, to go without makeup. Yes, this gives your skin a chance to breathe, but crucially it forces you to build confidence without a mask of foundation, stops you from hiding, and shows you that your friends, loved ones, even strangers do not give two hoots about your skin. It can feel very scary at first but is a fantastic exercise; a few times, when I have not been wearing makeup (which I was very reliant on as a self-conscious teen who hated her face) I have voiced my fears to friends, who said, ‘Really? I didn’t even notice you weren’t wearing it.’ The long term effect of this is that you begin to see how little the skin on your face matters, how much more important your personality, your intellect, and your empathy is in making you a beautiful person, and that you can still be a total babe even with a face full of spots. Another good exercise is to look at people around you who have acne and think about how they look to you- fine, right? Maybe they are even gorgeous! And does their acne change how hot you find them? Probably not!”

3. “Know that it will get better, and that once you leave middle school/high school, whether you have acne or not, people are more open-minded and view you for who you are as a person, not what your face looks like. Also, don’t pick at it!!!... You don’t want to have [acne] scars on your face later in life! I’m serious about that one.”

4. "Don't act like it's your fault in any way."
5. "Don't let yourself be defined by your acne! You are much more than your skin."
6. "Don't use too many products at the same time; they can be too harsh. Be patient and don't let your acne define who you are."
7. "When you are experiencing acne problems, it can seem like the end of the world. You feel embarrassed to show your face in public - and are particularly sensitive around the girl or guy you like. As someone who had moderate acne problems as a teenager, all I can say is it gets better... And at the end of the day, whether it's acne or any other kind of physical thing, you will learn that the people who truly matter in your life are the ones who love you for who you are, always, and don't care about how you look."
8. "I usually like to wash my face every night and you can do that either before you go to sleep, in the morning or in the shower. I recommend looking for facewash that has salicylic acid in it. Don't worry so much about covering it up with makeup because sometimes that can make it worse. And don't touch your face! All the gross dirt and oils from your hands will go on to your face and make you break out more! I've noticed that the main people/person that actually notices your acne is yourself. We always tend to over analyze everything about ourselves, so I wouldn't worry about it, but if you really want to, go to a dermatologist or even pick up some drug store face washes or anything like that."
9. "I had minor acne when I was in middle and high school. I used to pop zits. It wasn't a huge outbreak like it may be for some but it still was a bit embarrassing at the time. It caused some self-esteem issues because let's face it--what kid/teen isn't self-conscious and worried about what others think of them. My self-esteem dropped because of my acne. Because I was concerned how other people may perceive me because of my acne, so I would pop any zits and try to have as clear of a complexion as possible. The acne didn't really get in the way of my everyday living. It was more of a self-conscious/self-esteem matter.

My advice is to leave it alone. You're beautiful just as you are. The more skin products you use on your face the more it can get worse. It doesn't matter what other people think of you or say because of your acne. If anyone can't look past your acne and accept you for who you are then they're not really someone you want to be around, right? Your body is going through major hormonal changes during your teens. Some of these changes show up externally on your skin. Remember that."

10. “I’ve had extremely severe acne since I was 11 years old my entire face would be beet-red and my chin would be swollen from all of the pimples on it. Throughout my childhood, the most common phrase I heard was, ‘If you just use a little cleanser that will clear right up! You will be beautiful!’

It never cleared up. All of the cleanser in the world couldn’t give me clear skin.

One day when I was around 26 I looked in the mirror, at my post- adolescent face that was SUPPOSED to be clean and beautiful as promised by so many cosmetic companies, but was littered in acne scars. On that morning the first thought that came to my mind was, ‘I have constellations on my face!’ For the first time I was able to look at myself and not see zits, but a starry sky of scars.”

Acne may be a temporary annoyance for you, or it may permanently scar your skin. Never ever listen to anyone that tells you that ‘You could be so beautiful if only you used this product!’, because that person clearly cannot see the beauty inside of you. Acne really IS only skin deep, and it cannot touch your creativity, your intelligence, your imagination. Nobody is perfect, and do not waste a minute of your time wishing you had clear skin. Judge yourself based on what you have INSIDE.”