

What Is Causing My Acne? We Have the Answers

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Acne: the word gets thrown around a lot, but do you know exactly what it means? "Acne is a common skin condition commonly found in young adults," dermatologist Dr. Paul Jarrod Frank says. "It is a disease of the hair follicle and the pores that lead them to the skin."

More than just the typical pimple, the word "acne" encompasses everything from whiteheads to blackheads to inflamed cysts. That's right — even though you may not suffer from huge zits dotting your forehead, those blackheads that plague you also count as acne. Get all of Dr. Frank's tips when you keep reading.

Not all acne is created equal. "Hormonal and cystic acne are treated differently than blackheads and whiteheads," Dr. Frank says. "With hormonal acne, there is usually something more going on internally, whereas with blackheads and whiteheads, the problem could be oily skin."

Pinpointing the type of acne is easier than it seems: if skipping a face wash here and there causes you to break out, then your problem is probably oily skin or lack of exfoliation. But if you've tried everything and you're still breaking out, then a deeper issue may be going on.

So now that you know the difference in your acne, how do you treat it? Regular exfoliation is key to clearing up whiteheads and blackheads. Dr. Frank says that every woman should have a [Clarisonic Skin Care Brush](#) (\$119) in her arsenal and use it regularly. "Exfoliation is important no matter what type of skin one has," he says. "Whether acne is present or not, removing dead skin cells is important for skin's health." Diet also plays an important role. A dairy- and carb-heavy diet is "pro inflammatory," meaning it lends itself easily to acne. Stick to proteins and vegetables that are rich in color.

Hormonal acne getting you down? Talk to your dermatologist. Deeper issues mean deeper measures need to be taken. "Although acne has been blamed on everything from poor cleaning habits to greasy food and emotional stress, it appears that sensitivities to androgen or testosterone-like hormones play the most dramatic role," Frank says. In other words, that cookie you're munching on isn't the culprit. Identifying your acne is half the battle, and with this information, clear skin is well within your reach.