

appear naturally in humans.) Northerners may want to increase their dose to 2,000 IU per day during the autumn and winter months.

- For more information on vitamin D, visit Dr. Cannell's Web site, vitamindcouncil.com.

References

- Liu PT, et al. Toll-like receptor triggering of a vitamin D-mediated human antimicrobial response. *Science*. 2006 Mar 24;311(5768):1770-1773.
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SKIN HEALTH

How to Eliminate Acne

Most everyone can relate to acne since we all likely had some degree of it as adolescents. However, it plagues about half of us into adulthood, sometimes into middle age. We all know the routine: scrupulous face washing, avoidance of chocolate, and, when nothing else works, blame dear old mom and dad for passing on faulty genes.

Guess what? None of these things causes acne vulgaris, as it is officially called. They're all myths! Acne is not triggered by poor hygiene, chocolate per se, or genetics. Furthermore, the \$100 million Americans spend on soaps, scrubs, gels, creams, and other over-the-counter acne products every year does little to foil outbreaks.

But there's good news. Cutting-edge research reveals an underlying cause—and a very successful treatment—of this very, very common skin condition.

Cavemen Don't Get Acne

While researching the diet and health of primitive hunter-gatherer societies such as the Bantu and Zulu of Africa and the Eskimos of Canada, Loren Cordain, PhD, a leading expert in Stone Age nutrition, observed that acne is virtually nonexistent in cultures that eat a traditional diet of wild game, fish, fruit, tubers, and the like. He also noted that once those people move to cities or are otherwise introduced to refined sugars and grains, vegetable oils, and other processed foods, acne becomes as common for them as it is for Westerners.

Dr. Cordain then collaborated with field research teams to study the Kitava Islanders in the South Pacific and the Aché in the remote Paraguayan jungle, which are among the few tribes in the world who still live a pre-industrial lifestyle. Sure enough, acne was all but unheard of. For example, examinations of the entire Kativan population of 1,200, including 300 between 15 and 25 years of age,

revealed not a single blackhead, pimple, or other sign of acne—not one!

After ruling out genetics and other variables, Dr. Cordain concluded that acne vulgaris is “a disease of Western civilization.” More specifically, our epidemic of acne rests squarely on the shoulders of our “civilized” diet, especially our unbridled consumption of high-glycemic (GI) carbohydrates, which is unprecedented in human history.

The Insulin Connection

Bread, cereal, rice, pasta, chips, desserts, candy (it's not the chocolate but the sugar), and other sugary, starchy, high-GI foods make up nearly half of the average American's total caloric intake. When you eat these simple carbohydrates, they are rapidly converted into glucose and your blood sugar sharply rises. In response, your pancreas has to churn out large amounts of insulin in order to dispose of all that glucose. Eating pizza once a month wouldn't be a problem, but when you eat these foods multiple times a day, day in and day out, your insulin levels are chronically elevated.

If this sounds familiar, it's because I've been telling you about the adverse effects of elevated insulin for years. Over time, your cells become less sensitive to insulin's signals to take up glucose, a condition known as insulin resistance. This condition is linked with a host of problems, including hypertension, obesity, blood lipid abnormalities, type 2 diabetes, and coronary artery disease. This cluster of conditions, called metabolic syndrome (formerly called syndrome X), is a huge problem in our country. According to the latest National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 70 percent of Americans have at least one of these insulin resistance-related disorders.

Sugars + Starches = Acne

Dr. Cordain believes that acne should be added to this list. Elevated insulin triggers a cascade of hormonal reactions that adversely affect the skin. First, it prompts the secretion of androgens, hormones that cause the sebaceous, or oil-producing, glands in the skin to secrete excessive amounts of sebum, or oil. Second, it increases IGF-1, a growth factor that stimulates the overproduction of skin cells called keratinocytes and impairs the normal sloughing off of cells on the surface of the skin. And third, it triggers inflammation. Pores become blocked and inflamed and bacteria in the skin get trapped under proliferating cells, setting the stage for skin problems such as blackheads and pimples.

Although simply cutting out high-GI starches and sugars may be enough to put the brakes on blemishes, Dr. Cordain also advises taking supplemental fish oil and zinc for their anti-inflammatory effects and laying off refined vegetable oils (they cause inflammation) and dairy products (he describes milk as a "hormone cocktail" that contributes to acne).

The Proof Is in the Mirror

What first intrigued me about this novel approach to acne is that, for the first time ever, we can offer patients something that really works besides drugs such as Accutane (with their myriad adverse effects). But what really convinced me is the extraordinary success of patients who have followed this protocol.

Michelle suffered with acne for 16 years, since her early teens, and despite trying everything from Retin-A to antibiotics, she always had at least one pimple and lots of blackheads. After just one week on this diet, her skin cleared up. Every time she went off the diet her skin broke out again. She's been on it ever since, and her only problem is "the uncontrollable urge to go up to people at the grocery store and lecture them." Michelle also reports having more energy, and a "clearer head."

Penny, age 52, was plagued with "spots" off and on since her teens. After she made the suggested dietary changes, her skin improved significantly—and she lost 5 inches around her hips. This result is not surprising, because the diet is essentially the same one I recommend for weight loss.

Fast Results and Tremendous Side Benefits

One of the best selling points of this approach to acne is that you'll see results fast. It takes about 30 days for skin cells to turn over, so expect to see improvements within a week or two after making these dietary changes. Equally important is the fact that you will, like Michelle and Penny, reap tremendous benefits in other aspects of your health as well.

Recommendations:

- To treat and prevent acne, eliminate starches and sugars, refined vegetable oils, and dairy products from your diet. Replace them with low-GI vegetables, fruits, and nuts, along with plenty of protein from fish, poultry, and lean beef. Also include 2–4 g of fish oil and 25–50 mg of zinc in your daily supplement program. For details, read Dr. Cordain's book, *The Dietary Cure for Acne*, available at dietaryacnecure.com.
- This diet is also highly therapeutic for obesity, hypertension, diabetes, and coronary artery disease. Read about it in greater detail in my latest book, *The Whitaker Wellness Weight Loss Program*, available in bookstores, online at amazon.com, or by phone at (800) 810-6655.

Reference

Cordain L, et al. Acne vulgaris: a disease of Western civilization. *Arch Dermatol*. 2002 Dec;138(12):1584–1590.

Happy Halloween,



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