

A Nutritional Approach to Treating Acne

Has this ever happened to you? You've got something big coming up—a date with a new special someone, a job interview, or maybe an important presentation. The morning of the event, you look in the mirror and cringe. You've got a breakout. Whether acne is an every day occurrence or an occasional problem, it can impact your life—it's distressing and annoying. Plus, acne can be painful and lead to scarring.

If you're looking for relief, you can be overwhelmed with the choices that line the drugstore shelves: foaming face washes, pads soaked in chemicals, drying lotions and astringents. However, I think that one of the most important choices you can make is to give your body the nutrients it needs to heal irritated and inflamed skin from the inside and restore normal skin function.

What is Acne?

Acne forms when pores—or hair follicles become plugged with sebum (an oily substance meant to protect skin from drying out) and dead skin cells. Bacteria build up in the pores, triggering inflammation, and pimples and pustules appear.

Acne is not really about “clean skin.” In fact, harsh cleansers that are part of a traditional acne regimen can make your skin more prone to breakouts. That's because they can be irritating and strip natural oils from the skin. Those oils include protective peptides that help kill bacteria. Your skin responds to this assault by producing even more oil.



Hormone fluctuations, especially during puberty, can also increase sebum production, making your skin more oily and your pores more likely to get clogged. Some medications, like birth control pills or corticosteroids, can also cause acne. Studies have also shown that a diet high in sugar and fat can increase sebum levels and make your skin more prone to acne.

A New Approach to Acne—From the Inside Out

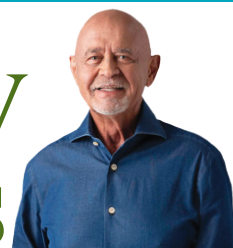
In reality, healthy skin is really more about what's going on inside your body than outside it. We need nutrients to help heal your skin and control oxidative stress, but also ones that help your body fight off bad bacteria that trigger acne formation. Fortunately, natural ingredients can help make clear skin possible.

Sulfur is an essential mineral present in most protein-rich foods, including meats, nuts, and eggs. It's abundant in the human body. Sulfur has been used for generations as a natural acne fighter. It's a requirement in glutathione production, the most important antioxidant in the body and essential for healthy skin, hair, and nails. The antibacterial activity of sulfur may help cleanse the intestinal tract, preventing the buildup of bad bacteria. Sulfur may also help stop over production of oil in the skin to prevent pores from becoming clogged.

Don't confuse sulfur with sulfa. They are similar-sounding words, but they're not related. “Sulfa” is a class of drugs called “sulfonamides.” These synthetic drugs are not the mineral sulfur.

Potassium is another abundant mineral in the body needed for proper cell and tissue function and aids in the body's waste removal process. Potassium is a much-needed alkalizing mineral that helps keep our natural acid/alkaline balance stable. Along with sulfur, natural practitioners believe potassium helps keep bacteria and fungi in the gut in check. Potassium is also

Terry Talks Nutrition



TERRY'S BOTTOM LINE

Toxins, stress, and poor diets can be rough on even the best skin. If you suffer from acne, a nutritional approach can help get your skin back on track. A mix of vitamins, minerals, and herbs will help:

- Balance oil production
- Reduce breakouts
- Improve skin integrity

HERE IS THE FORMULA I SUGGEST:

Vitamin A (as retinyl acetate)	1,500 mcg (5,000 IU)
Vitamin C (as ascorbic acid)	100 mg
Vitamin B6 (as pyridoxal-5-phosphate)	5 mg
Pantothenic Acid (as d-calcium pantothenate)	25 mg
Zinc (from zinc glycinate chelate)	15 mg
Chromium (from chromium picolinate)	100 mcg
Potassium (from potassium chloride)	100 mg
Sulfur (as sublimed)	100 mg
Burdock (<i>Arctium lappa</i>) Root Extract (4:1)	50 mg
Boswellia (<i>Boswellia serrata</i>) Gum Resin Extract standardized to contain ≥ 70% total organic and boswellic acids with AKBA ≥ 10%, with ≤ 5% beta-boswellic acid	50 mg

linked to liver and kidney functions, our bodies' detoxification organs. Along with muscle weakness and fatigue, acne is another sign of potassium deficiency.

More...

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Vitamin A: Retinoids—Vitamin A and its derivatives—help prevent the buildup of dead skin cells that leads to clogged pores. Vitamin A is also required for immune system function, which is important in controlling acne. As an antioxidant and anti-inflammatory, it's important for skin function and repair.

Vitamin C: Vitamin C fights oxidative stress—the cell-destroying effect of free radicals—and promotes wound healing and healthy tissue development, including the skin surface. It also helps the body synthesize collagen, a skin-building protein that's important for healing acne scars.

Pantothenic Acid: This B vitamin (B5) is important for the outer layers of skin. Preliminary clinical studies on oral supplementation with pantothenic acid as an acne treatment have been promising. In one placebo-controlled study, a pantothenic acid-based supplement reduced facial lesions in cases of mild to moderate acne by 67 percent after 12 weeks. The quality of life measurement for those using pantothenic acid also improved significantly over 85 percent compared to 36 percent for placebo.

Vitamin B6: An essential vitamin needed for over 100 enzymes that trigger metabolic processes in the body, including those involved in nervous and immune system function, making it a great addition to your anti-acne regimen. Vitamin B6 is also a potent antioxidant, and low levels of vitamin B6 have been associated with increased inflammation in the body. I recommend vitamin B6 in the pyridoxal-5-phosphate or “P-5-P” form because this is the bioidentical, active form of the nutrient, which requires no conversion.

Zinc: An essential trace element, zinc is crucial to cellular metabolism and structure, especially in the skin. In fact, six percent of the zinc stored in your body is found in the skin. Zinc helps speed

wound healing and is crucial for healthy immune cell function.

A recent clinical study examined whether levels of zinc in the body correlated to acne severity. The study found that participants with lower levels of zinc suffered from more severe acne.

Chromium: Foods that increase the glycemic load, a measurement of how quickly food raises your glucose level, have the potential to increase insulin, which may affect acne. Chromium, another essential trace element, helps the body change food, like sugar and starches, into energy. Scientific studies suggest that chromium may improve glucose metabolism to process sugar more effectively.

Boswellia: When acne turns red and ugly, it usually means inflammation is on the rise. Boswellia works specifically on inflammation. It's an inhibitor of 5-LOX, an enzyme that activates leukotrienes, which cause inflammation and promote free-radical damage.

When looking for products that include boswellia, be sure to find one standardized for at least 10 percent AKBA (acetyl-11-keto- β -boswellic acids), the boswellic acids with the most profound effects on inflammation. Unstandardized extracts can have very low levels of AKBA.

Burdock: A traditional herbal blood purifier, burdock root helps protect your liver, which makes it a good choice to keep your body's detoxification systems working. In addition, burdock has anti-inflammatory, anti-bacterial, free-radical scavenging, and antioxidant properties. Research suggests that burdock improves the metabolism of the dermal extracellular matrix, which is essential to skin health and wound healing.



Face Your Day with Confidence

Part of avoiding acne and keeping skin healthy is making sure you have the nutrients on board that support the skin and the gut. Stick with the ingredients I've outlined here for at least 60 days. Some people will respond right away, within about 1 to 2 weeks. But for others, the nutrients need time to do their job and start undoing the problems that lead to acne. For even more complete healthy skin support, I'd also recommend sea buckthorn extract and a high-quality probiotic. Sea buckthorn supplies a wide range of valuable omega fatty acids (including the rare omega-7 fatty acid). Probiotics help improve gut bacterial balance, which affects our overall health.

It just makes sense. Supplying your body with the nutrients it needs to keep your skin functioning at its best will lead to a healthier you on the inside and the outside. You deserve to have healthy, clear skin!

When in doubt, always consult your physician or healthcare practitioner. This column is intended to provide you with information to maintain your health.