



Acne Guide for the Attractive Man



By AcneEinstein.com

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Introduction

Do you ever wish you could just wave a magic wand and make your acne disappear?

Let's face it. Putting your best foot forward and attracting women is hard enough without acne ruining your face. If you are anything like me, you already have enough things to be self-conscious, and having acne isn't exactly making things better.

I can't teach you how to meet women (work in progress for me, too), but I can show you how to get rid of your skin problems to make the task a bit easier.

My name is Seppo Puusa, and I run a website called AcneEinstein.com. As the name implies, I'm a bit of a science nerd (Star Wars and D&D featured far more prominently in my teens than women).

I've lived with acne for roughly two decades now (I'm 38 as I'm writing this). At first, I did all the usual things. I tried all the creams and lotions, went to dermatologists to get antibiotics and finally was put on isotretinoin (Accutane). None of that helped.

For the past 15 years I've been trying to get over acne with natural means. I wasted eight years of my life trying all sorts of natural and 'holistic' treatments. I tried some weird things I'd prefer not to even talk about. Let's put it this way. Do you have a friend who has strange ideas about health, and you'd prefer

he/she NOT talk to you about them (but they usually do)? I was one of those guys.

About six years ago I came to my senses and started applying science and critical thinking to this problem. I started reading studies on acne, and after several years and over 1000 studies later, I've gotten my skin under control and have a good idea of what causes acne and how to get rid of it.

In this short report, I'll share with you some of the best ideas and tips for getting rid of acne.

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What causes acne

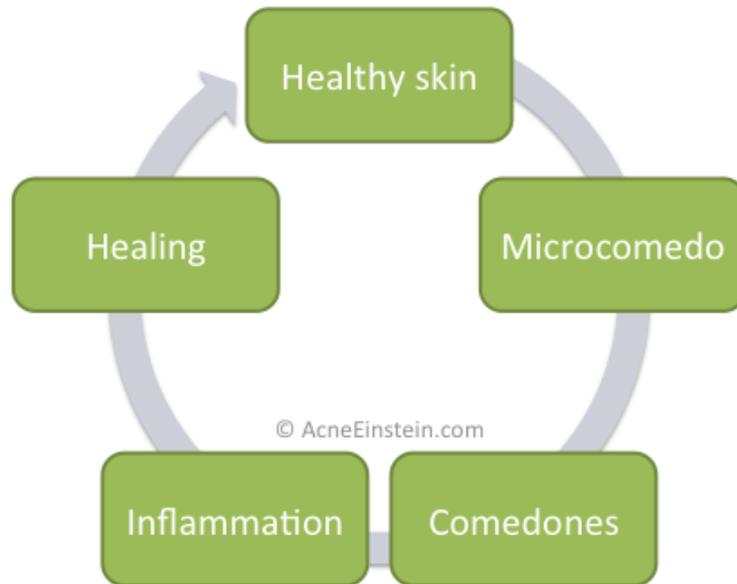
I know you are eager to get started and want to get to the tips and recommendations ASAP. But I'm going to ask you to be patient for a bit and give me two pages to explain what causes acne. It's theory and boring, yes, but you need to know this stuff to understand why you get acne and what you can do to get over it.

Acne is an inflammatory disease of the skin follicles (skin pores). Each follicle is like a tube that's lined with cells called keratinocytes. Due to various reasons, in acne-prone skin, keratinocytes grow and divide faster than normal. Accumulation of keratinocytes on the walls narrows and eventually blocks the skin pore, leading to the first stage of a pimple known as microcomedo.

As sebum and dead skin cells accumulate in the blocked pore, it expands and turns into a comedo, i.e. a blackhead or a whitehead.

As the walls get thicker, red blood cells cannot deliver oxygen into the blocked pore. Low oxygen environment is ideal for acne-causing bacteria to multiply, resulting in an exponential increase in inflammation in the area and formation of an inflammatory pimple (papules and pustules). If the follicle breaks, the inflammatory material spills and inflammation spreads into the surrounding area. In the skin, you'll see this as a large inflamed area surrounding the original pimple.

I call this progress from healthy skin pores through microcomedones and comedones into inflammatory pimples as *acne cycle*.



No single cause is responsible for the acne cycle, but scientists have linked several factors to various stages of the acne cycle, including:

- Deficiency in *linoleic acid* (LA). Sebum from acne patients has less LA than sebum from people without acne, causing a localized LA deficiency in the skin pores. LA deficiency has been linked to excess keratinocyte growth. LA deficiency also makes the immune system more aggressive; studies have shown that LA suppresses the number of free radicals white blood cells release when they encounter bacteria. Free radicals destroy the bacteria but also cause oxidative damage to the healthy cells in the area.
- Oxidative stress and lipid peroxidation. Sebum contains a substance called squalene. Oxidative damage turns squalene into squalene peroxide, a highly comedogenic substance suspected to be the trigger that kicks off the acne cycle. In fact, animal studies have shown that exposing healthy skin to squalene peroxide is enough to cause cystic acne. Sources of oxidative damage include UV radiation, air pollution, bacterial toxins and free radicals released by white blood cells.
- Insufficient antioxidants. Several studies show that acne patients don't have enough antioxidants to protect squalene from oxidative damage. Low levels of antioxidants and higher levels of oxidative damage has been observed both in the skin and systemically in the body.
- Hormones and diet. Hormones affect nearly all the factors linked to the

acne cycle. They increase keratinocyte growth, boost sebum production, and regulate inflammation. Acne is usually linked to androgens (male sex hormones). But studies show that most people with acne have normal levels of androgens. New studies show that hormones *insulin* and *insulin like growth factor-1* (IGF-1) regulate the sensitivity of the skin to androgens. This suggests that insulin, rather than androgens, is the most relevant hormone for acne patients.

- Stress. Neurotransmitters released during stress can cause inflammation in skin cells and increase sebum production.
- Bacteria. While no one denies that bacteria have a role in acne formation, new research shows that bacteria do not cause the early stages of the acne cycle. Bacteria exponentially increase inflammation in already-blocked pores. As such, antibacterials should be a part, but not the focus, of your acne treatment program.

Quick fixes

Acne is a complicated condition, and getting over it usually requires diet and lifestyle change - If you recoil from hearing this, keep in mind that all the diet and lifestyle changes required to get over acne also help you to look better and sexier. However, certain supplements and smart skin care strategies can serve as quick and simple fixes to reduce acne without diet or lifestyle changes.

Zinc supplements

To date, zinc is the only nutritional supplement seriously studied as a treatment for acne. Most of the studies were done in the late seventies, and while they showed zinc was effective, it was deemed not to be effective enough. Antibiotics showed more promise and that's why doctors started prescribing them instead of zinc.

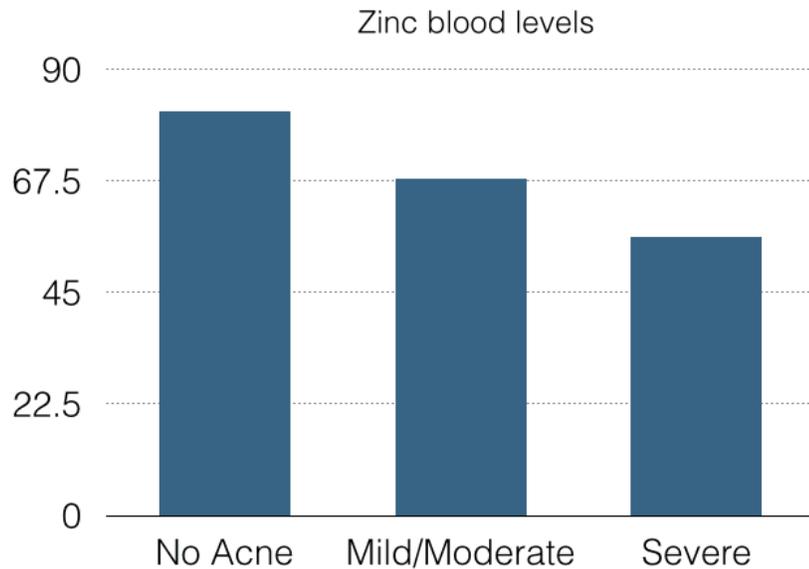
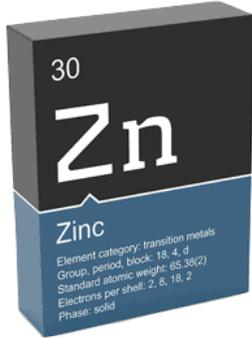
That doesn't mean zinc wouldn't work, as we are about to find out.

Acne patients are low in zinc

In 2013, [Turkish researchers](#) compared blood levels of zinc, vitamin E, and vitamin A between acne patients and their peers without acne. This image shows the results divided by acne severity.

24%

Lower zinc levels
in acne patients



© AcneEinstein.com

Other studies have come up with similar findings.

Among other things, zinc plays a role in the antioxidant system. These results probably reflect the fact that acne patients are under high oxidative stress (inflammation). Studies looking at other antioxidants and signs of inflammation also show that acne patients are low in antioxidants.

Zinc supplements are almost as effective as oral antibiotics

To date, 14 studies have looked at the effect of zinc supplementation on acne. Most were published in the late seventies and eighties. I won't go through them individually, but most show zinc supplementation reduced acne anywhere from 30 to 58%. Some studies showed that zinc was as effective as the antibiotics used at that time.

The best study was published in 2001 by a group of French researchers. In the study, 332 patients were given either 30 mg of zinc or 100 mg of minocycline (an oral antibiotic). This graph shows the inflammatory pimple counts for both groups.

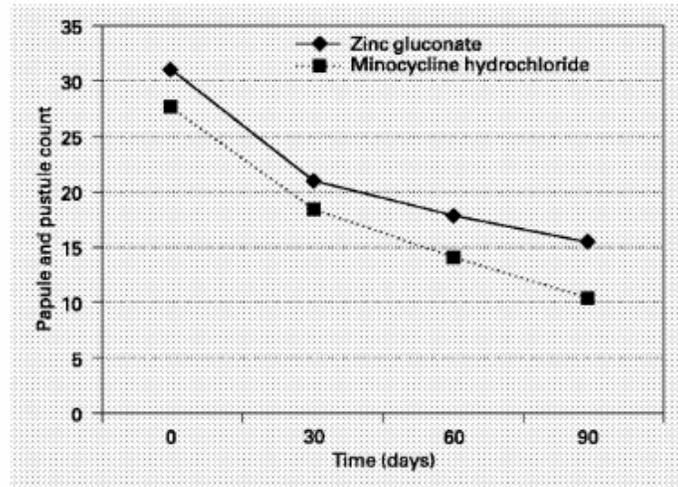


Fig. 2. Superficial inflammatory lesion counts (papules and pustules) between day 0 and day 90.

In case it's hard to read, the darker, solid line shows the results for the zinc group. Sure, the minocycline group got somewhat better results, but it's equally true that there was a significant drop in the number of inflammatory pimples in the zinc group.

As to non-inflammatory pimples (blackheads and whiteheads), their numbers dropped by 21% and 34% in the zinc and minocycline groups, respectively. So there minocycline had a clear advantage over zinc.

From this study, it seems that zinc supplementation works well for inflammatory pimples but isn't that effective for blackheads and whiteheads.

Action item: Take 30 mg of zinc a day. You can take any of the many forms of zinc available. If you get cramps or abdominal pain, try taking zinc with meals.

Smart skincare

Skincare isn't just for women - at least not if you want to have a skin with a healthy glow that attracts women. The health of your skin reflects your overall health. Skin that's blotchy, flaky and red signals to women you don't value yourself enough to take care of yourself properly. And if you don't value yourself, why should she?

To be honest, some of this is genetic, and not everyone can have model-quality skin. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't make the best of what you have got.

So let's talk about how to make the best of your skin with topical skin care products. But we have to start by talking about what not to do.

The wrong way to treat acne

Inherent in guys is this idea that stronger and harder is almost always better. A door doesn't open? Push harder. Don't see results in the gym? Push yourself harder.

In many areas, this approach serves us well. One area where it doesn't is treating your acne. Let's say that you have acne and treating it with 2.5% benzoyl peroxide cream (such as Proactiv). But the cream just doesn't seem to work. You've used it for four weeks, and your acne is still the same. Applying the brute force logic, many guys think they need a stronger treatment. So they buy some 'max strength' cream with 10% benzoyl peroxide, or they apply the BP cream four times a day instead of the recommended two times. More often than not, this is too much, and the skin becomes dry, red and easily irritated.

Why?

Because benzoyl peroxide is an oxidative substance. It causes oxidative damage to all the cells and organisms it comes in contact with. In English, that means it destroys the cells. In fact, [studies](#) have shown that a single application of benzoyl peroxide depletes 93.2% of the vitamin E in the skin. Vitamin E is one of the most important antioxidants in the skin. Being fat-soluble, it can protect squalene from oxidative damage that turns it into comedogenic squalene peroxide. [Many researchers](#) believe that oxidative damage to squalene is the trigger that kicks off the acne formation process.

My point is that little bit of benzoyl peroxide can be good because it keeps the bacteria in check, but too much benzoyl peroxide destroys the skin's natural defenses and leaves it more vulnerable to acne.

Signs that your skin is damaged and needs some help include:

- Dry and flakey
- Redness and blotchiness
- Easily irritated by soaps and acne products

This kind of skin damage can occur even if you aren't using harsh acne treatment products. You should still follow the steps below to fix the problem.

Proper skin care

Dryness, redness, and sensitivity are almost always signs of problems in the skin barrier function. The skin barrier is a layer of dead skin cells organized in a brick and mortar fashion (think of how bricks are laid out and you'll get the correct idea) and glued together with sebum. This layer prevents moisture from escaping the skin and keeps bacteria, dirt, and other stuff out.

The aim of a good skin care regimen is to restore the skin barrier function and to provide the skin with antioxidants that protect the skin from UV radiation and irritation.

Doing this is relatively simple:

1. **Stop harming the skin** - If you currently use benzoyl peroxide or other harsh acne treatment products, you need to either reduce how much/often you use them or completely stop them. This can result in acne exploding out of control, so I recommend tapering them off over time. Once your skin has recovered, you can introduce these back to your skin care routine. You may also need to stop washing your skin with soap or cheap cleansers. Surfactants used in cleansers and soaps strip the protective fats from the skin and often end up irritating sensitive skin. For skin that's very sensitive, I recommend you stop all cleansers and soaps and just wash it with warm water until it has recovered sufficiently. If you feel like you need to use something, go for a cleanser formulated for eczema or sensitive skin.
2. **Apply antioxidants** - Studies have shown that topical antioxidants can reduce acne as much as benzoyl peroxide and topical antibiotics do. Go for a serum or cream that has vitamin C, vitamin B3, or both. You need 4 to 5% concentration for either of those to be effective - this means it has to be listed within the first five ingredients on the label. Lower than that and the concentration gets too low to really be effective. You can use topical antioxidants together with your acne product. Apply your acne treatment product first, wait for 5 to 10 minutes, and then apply the antioxidant.
3. **Moisturize to seal the skin barrier** - If your skin is dry or sensitive, you have to use moisturizer or oil to create a seal the skin and give it time to heal. A moisturizer formulated for sensitive skin is a good bet to start with. CeraVe has products that are both affordable and formulated to get the job done. You can also try to rub a few drops of oil on the skin. If you do this, go for oils with high linoleic to oleic acid ratio; such as safflower, grapeseed, rosehip, or sunflower oil. Do not use olive or coconut oil on your skin.

Acne types and clearing acne for good

We intuitively understand that how we eat and live our lives affects the health of our heart, liver, and other organs. It would be almost preposterous to claim otherwise. Yet, when it comes to the skin, our largest organ, we often fail to make the same connection. Perhaps this stems from the fact that dermatologists have, for decades, denied any link between diet and acne.

However, this denial has never been based on good evidence, and a [2010 review](#) on the relationship between diet and acne concluded the following: "*Dermatologists can no longer dismiss the association between diet and acne.*"

For a detailed look at the link between diet and acne, please see this post on AcneEinstein.com: [Debunking The REAL Diet Acne Myth](#).

The truth is that the health of your skin is often a reflection of your overall health. Not always, and anyone can point to their friend who eats crap all day and has perfect skin, but for those of us genetically prone to getting acne, poor diet and lifestyle do contribute to our skin problems. Likewise, proper diet and lifestyle go a long way towards fixing them.

However, knowing what to eat to get over acne is often far more complicated than simply 'eating healthy'. For example, I recently consulted with a woman who ate a lot of fish and spinach - because they are "healthy." But because she had a condition called histamine intolerance, these foods wreaked havoc in her body - acne included. After removing these, her skin cleared, and she started feeling better.

Acne types

One of the enduring mysteries of the acne world is why different people often require completely different treatments to get clear. If we all suffer from the same acne, then why do I get pimples after eating onions while most women say they get acne from dairy products and sugar?

After years of helping people get over acne and reading a well over 1000 medical studies, I've come to realize that we don't all suffer from the problem and that there are different types of acne. While all of the types look the same on the skin, each type has different internal causes.

At the start of the report, I went over several factors that contribute to the acne cycle. I mentioned hormones and lack of antioxidants / oxidative stress as potential causes. While it's true that many people with persistent acne are under higher than normal oxidative stress, it's equally true that many things cause oxidative stress and thus lead to acne. These include gut problems, food and other allergies, stress, and autoimmune problems. In each case, the oxidative stress may lead to acne, and while acne may look the same on the surface, in each case, it is caused by a different internal problem. And because there are different internal causes, you cannot treat every person with acne with the same diet and lifestyle plan.

Here are the most common acne types along with points on how to fix them.

Hormonal

Hormonal-type acne is caused when the skin cells are stimulated to grow too much by certain hormones. The most important hormones include androgens (testosterone and DHT), insulin, and insulin-like growth factor-1 (IGF-1). These hormones stimulate the skin cells to grow too much and boost sebum (oil) production in the skin. These hormones are the reason why people who take anabolic steroids often get acne.

Signs that you have hormonal-type acne include:

- You get acne after eating sugar, high glycemic index carbohydrates or dairy products.
- You get acne from protein powders and mass gainer supplements.
- You are a bit overweight, and/or have a sedentary lifestyle (not always the case, but these increase the risk of insulin resistance).

To fix hormonal-type acne, cut sugar, high glycemic index carbohydrates, and dairy products from your diet. Focus on protein and high-quality fats. You don't have to go on a low-carb diet, but it's a good idea to limit carbs to around 30 to 40% of your total calories and focus on high-quality carbs (whole grains, corn, sweet potatoes, beans, and legumes, etc.). If you lift, you may have to stop taking protein powders and mass gainers. At the very least, switch to non-dairy

protein powders.

Gut acne

In 2011, Drs. Bowe and Logan published a [ground-breaking paper](#) reviewing all the evidence linking acne to problems in the digestive tract. They concluded the following:

"It was not the contention of Stokes and Pillsbury, nor is it ours, that acne is a disease of the gastrointestinal tract. Yet, there appears to be more than enough supportive evidence to suggest that gut microbes, and the integrity of the gastrointestinal tract itself, are contributing factors in the acne process."

Bowe, W. P. & Logan, A. C. Acne vulgaris, probiotics and the gut-brain-skin axis - back to the future? Gut Pathog 3, 1 (2011).

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21281494>

Simply put, there's evidence to suggest that gastrointestinal problems (or gut problems) can be a factor for some people with acne. Interacting with my customers in our private support group would suggest that gastrointestinal problems are almost the rule, not the exception, when it comes to acne patients. And that taking care of them can help the skin.

Signs that you have gut problems:

- Bloating or abdominal pain/discomfort following a meal.
- Feeling gassy or smelly farts.
- Irregular bowel movements.
- Constipation or loose stools.

Explaining how to fix these is outside the scope of this short report, but I recommend you look into low FODMAP diet as well as books aimed towards people with irritable bowel syndrome. Of course, my course, Clear for Life, also has a detailed section that goes over, step-by-step, what you need to do to get over gut problems.

Inflammatory-type acne

Inflammatory-type acne includes different reactions that cause inflammation (and oxidative stress) in the body and acne that follows. Inflammatory-type acne is often linked to gut acne, and fixing the gut often goes a long way towards reducing food-related inflammatory reactions.

The most common ones include:

- Histamine intolerance
- Food allergies and sensitivities
- Other allergic reactions
- Gluten intolerance

Pinpointing the exact cause of inflammatory-type acne often takes time and requires a lot of trial and error. As such, it's way out of the scope of this short report. But if you suffer from unexplained breakouts related to food, I suggest you look into histamine intolerance. It's by far the most common reason for inflammatory-type acne. You can also try to take an OTC antihistamine for a few weeks to see if it helps your skin.

Stress/emotional-type acne

Stress and anxiety trigger the release of neurotransmitters. There's evidence to show these neurotransmitters affect the skin in a way that increases the risk of acne; including an increase in sebum production, a release of inflammatory substances, and weakening of the skin barrier function. Stress can also affect acne indirectly by causing insulin resistance and boosting the levels of hormones linked to acne. Stress is also a known factor in many gut problems. In short, if there's something that's bad for your skin, stress will make it worse.

Stress/emotional acne is one of the hardest nuts to crack, mostly because people with emotional acne often insist on doing exactly the wrong things.

Many people are going to have an immediate gut reaction against what I will say next. So please, take a deep breath and hear me out. Because this is really important.

You cannot get over emotional acne by fixing acne. Acne is not the main problem in emotional acne and focusing on getting over acne is not, in my opinion, the best thing to do.

I'm not saying that that getting over acne wouldn't make you feel better. Of course, it would.

I'm saying that, paradoxically, trying to get over acne is probably not the best way to get over emotional-type acne – and that it may not even be possible.

This is not some weird Zen of Yoda speak; this will make perfect sense in a

moment.

People with emotional-type acne are often in a self-perpetuating cycle. Acne causes stress and anxiety, and the chemicals and neurotransmitters released during stress cause even more acne, which of course leads to more stress and anxiety. And so the cycle goes on. To stop the cycle, you have to reduce the feelings of stress and anxiety.

The root problem is usually dysfunctional self-image, -beliefs, and patterns of thinking. The pain that stems from self-image problems gets linked to acne. Acne becomes a channel for the pain, and it takes the blame for the pain. It's much easier to say I'm ugly because of acne than to admit I'm ugly and just don't like myself. Similarly, people often believe that, if they could only get over acne, then they would be happy/successful/rich/whatever.

They rarely realize that it's their beliefs, and the way they think, not acne, that causes the suffering. They get into this cycle where they do everything they can to get over acne. But nothing they do has any real effect on their emotional pain, and acne refuses to budge. Lack of result, despite all the efforts, causes even more anxiety and desperation. They often feel they need to do more, cut out more bad foods, be even stricter with diet, take more supplements, to do more cleansing. And so the cycle goes on.

While nobody denies that acne is a factor in their emotional suffering, there's evidence to show it's not the main reason.

Signs of stress/emotional type acne include:

- Acne causes severe stress and anxiety.
- You spend a lot of time obsessing over acne.
- You are very sensitive to comments about your skin.
- Stress and anxiety acne causes are NOT linked to its severity. People with severe acne may experience less stress than someone with mild emotional acne.
- Friends and family don't think your acne is as big of a problem as you think it is.
- You don't want to leave the house, and you are becoming socially isolated, or acne otherwise interferes with your daily life.
- You are willing to do almost anything to get over acne, e.g., stick to an extremely restrictive diet; you fear that even small slip ups will cause acne; you are extremely healthy; you take all the supplements you can think of.

- You believe other people think less of you because of your acne. It may even seem like they are using body language to signal they don't like you, for example by turning to face away from you or imperceptibly putting more distance between you and them.
- You believe you have to get over acne until you can be happy / successful / get a job / find love / whatever.

I want to make it clear that it's normal for almost anyone with acne to show some of the signs. Someone with a severe acne may be reluctant to leave the house, which is completely understandable and doesn't necessarily mean one has emotional acne.

My 'diagnostic criteria' for emotional acne is the combination of high levels of stress and willingness to go to extreme lengths to get over acne with little to no results to show for. The emails from people with emotional acne usually begin with something like this: *"I've suffered from acne for years, and I've tried/am doing insert a very long list of diets, cleanses, supplements, meditation, etc., but nothing seems to help. I'm desperate and stuck, what can I do?"*

Getting over emotional acne means fixing the beliefs and thought patterns that contribute to poor self-image and cause the emotional pain. As you do this, you feel less stressed and anxious over your skin, which not only makes you feel better but also lessens the strain on your skin.

Here are some resources to get you started:

- Self-compassion exercises: <http://self-compassion.org>
- Gratitude and positive psychology techniques: Try The Five Minute Journal

Cognitive behavior therapy: Start by reading this book: [How To Stubbornly Refuse To Make Yourself Miserable About Anything-yes, Anything](#)

Summing up

Let's recap what we covered in this report:

- If you have moderate to severe acne, try taking 30 mg of zinc a day. Feel free to choose any of the many forms of zinc available. Take with a meal, if you get cramps or abdominal pain from the supplements.
- Dry, red and easily irritated skin is a sign of skin barrier damage. If this is you, you need to give your time to recover. Stop or use less benzoyl peroxide or other harsh acne treatment products. If your skin is very sensitive, it's a good idea to stop soap and cleansers and just wash your face with warm water only. Use serums or creams with vitamin C and/or B3 to support the health of the skin and reduce oxidative stress on the skin. Use sensitive skin moisturizer (like CeraVe) to protect the skin.
- Getting over acne for good often requires diet and lifestyle changes. However, no diet works for everyone, and what you need to eat depends on what causes your acne. Here are common scenarios:
 - Guys who break out from sugar and/or dairy products should reduce sugar, high glycemic index carbohydrates, and dairy products. It's a good idea to restrict carbohydrates to 30 to 40% of your total calories. If you lift, you may need to ditch protein powders or, at the very least, switch to non-dairy proteins.
 - Do you experience bloating, cramps, digestive problems, flatulence, loose stools or constipation? If so, your digestive issues may be linked to your skin problems. Look into low FODMAP diet and reduce fiber and complex carbohydrates to give your digestive system rest.
 - Does it seem like almost everything you eat causes acne? Then you may have inflammatory acne that's linked to histamine intolerance or food sensitivities. Consider an elimination diet to pinpoint the problem foods.
 - Do you constantly worry about your skin? Do you skip work/school and social activities because of your acne? Do your friends tell your acne isn't that bad? Then you may suffer from stress/emotional acne, and the stress and anxiety from acne may perpetuate it. Getting over this type requires stopping the acne -> stress -> more acne -> more stress cycle. Look into self-compassion, gratitude exercises, and cognitive behavior

therapy.

Sick of acne but don't know how to get over it?

You don't have to live with acne that ruins your confidence and chances of meeting women. Clear for Life is a science-based natural acne treatment program that shows you how to eliminate the root cause of acne, get long lasting results, and finally be free from acne.

[LEARN MORE](#)