

7 Common Acne Myths

1. **MYTH: Poor Hygiene Causes Acne**

A common cause of acne is overproduction of oil and accumulation of dead skin cells in your pores, so it's important to keep your skin clean. But overproduction of oil and accumulation of dead skin can happen no matter how often you wash. Plus, conventional advice also warns against irritating your skin through excessive washing.

In my experience: The problem is that cleansing methods or exfoliation products don't get you the *deep* exfoliation you need. If dead skin is piled up and you don't clear it away, the result will be the same no matter how much or how little you wash. You will have persistent acne.

2. **MYTH: Only Teenagers Get Acne**

While acne is common in adolescents due to hormonal changes, people of all ages struggle with acne. Adult acne is increasingly common and can have many contributing factors, including stress, hormonal fluctuations, and diet. But that's not the whole story ...

In my experience: Lack of deep exfoliation is also a major contributor to adult acne. Oil on your skin causes dead cells to stick longer and clog pores. Many people who have oily skin may not realize they aren't exfoliating enough.

3. **MYTH: Sun Can Clear Up Acne**

It's thought that sun exposure can temporarily dry out acne spots, but it can also cause damage and lead to premature aging of the skin.

In my experience: It's not the best idea to try to clear your skin using UV radiation. I have done this myself, but now realize how harmful it can be. I exfoliate instead. And then I use sunscreen or find shade to protect myself from harmful UV rays.

4. **MYTH: Junk Food Causes Acne**

A healthy diet can support overall health, including skin health. That's nothing new. But there is also no direct evidence that specific foods cause acne.

In my experience: Eat healthy food, of course. That's great advice for everyone. But you don't have to swear off treats—chocolate, beer/wine, fried foods, ice cream—on account of your skin. You may just feel deprived AND have acne.

What works instead? Deep exfoliation. I have found that as long as I have a regular exfoliation routine, I can eat a reasonably healthy diet, but also enjoy treats (those listed above and others) and still have clear skin.

5. **MYTH: Makeup Causes Acne**

It's a common belief that it's specific types of makeup and how they're used that contribute to acne. Non-comedogenic products are presumably less likely to clog pores. It's also important to remove makeup thoroughly at the end of the day.

In my experience: The type of makeup won't matter very much if you're putting it on skin with pores that are already clogged with oil and dead skin. You'll still have acne while using non-comedogenic makeup.

With the right amount of exfoliation, your reasons for using makeup may change—imagine what it would be like to have clear skin and to not need foundation or cover-up. You may find yourself using much less makeup, or maybe none at all.

6. **MYTH: Stronger Products Work Better**

Strong acne products or overuse of products may actually irritate your skin and make acne worse. Always use acne treatments as directed by a dermatologist or per product instructions.

In my experience: With consistent deep exfoliation, you may no longer need strong products or even any acne products at all.

7. **MYTH: Acne Will Just Go Away on Its Own**

This may be true for some people. For others, acne can persist for years or decades. It's common to hear or read that proper skin care and, in some cases, medical treatment are needed to manage acne.

In my experience: No one seems to know what "proper" skin care is for those of us with oily, sticky, and persistently acne-prone skin. When I stumbled on the answer, 20 years after the start of my own struggle with acne, it seemed way too simple.

I found that the answer is deep exfoliation—but I'm not sure many people realize how much dead skin needs to come off regularly to keep your skin healthy. Even with expensive topical treatments or a complicated, multi-step skincare routine, you may not be exfoliating deeply enough.

Disclaimer: This information is based on my personal experience and is not medical advice. Please consult a dermatologist or other healthcare provider with concerns about acne or questions regarding treatment options.