The curse of adult acne!

Blemishes and breakouts are not just for teenagers. New! looks at the rise of adult acne and how you can zap those zits for good...

WHAT IS ADULT ACNE?
All types of acne — blackheads, whiteheads, pimples and cysts — develop when pores in our skin become clogged. The culprit is oil, an oil in our skin that’s produced naturally on the face, chest, back and shoulders. As well as clogging pores, excess oil increases the risk of bacterial infections and normally lives on our skin. Pores can become infected, causing the spots that take up our skin.

“Acne is one of the most common skin conditions and something you can experience in your 20s, 30s and beyond,” explains Dr Jim Short, medical director of the Dermatology clinic, “It’s a growing problem and we don’t fully understand why it happens or why it’s increasing. It’s mainly a problem for women who are affected by it and it’s most common among Afro-Caribbean and Hispanic people.”

Acne is also linked to hormonally and genetically.

Stress is believed to play a big part. “The skin and mind are linked by the autonomic nervous system,” says Dr Adam Frishmuth, a leading dermatologist at the Harley Street Dermatology Clinic, “The more anxious you are, the more likely it is to affect your skin.”

HOW IS IT TREATED?
Contrary to popular belief, ‘drinking lots of water won’t cure adult acne. Food and drink contributes to skin health,’ says Dr Friedman. However, if you’re eating the right foods, it can help.

Dr Friedman advises acne should be treated with medicines. “Acne treatment is broken down into three different types: treatments that reduce bacteria, to target bacteria, treatments like the corticosteroids that reduce inflammation and hormones, and treatments to target overactive glands, that it’s the treatment depends on the severity of the acne and the impact on the sufferer,” he says.

Stress creams are available for milder cases, while tablets are preferable for more stubborn spots. Dr Friedman says, “About two-thirds of cases can be solved with common drugs — they can clear acne within 20 weeks. There are temporary measures, such as laser treatment and makeup, but Dr Bower warns, ‘Make-up can often irritate the skin, the pores and make acne persist, so choose wisely.’

If you’re concerned about acne, don’t hesitate to visit your GP — help is out there.

CELEBRITY SUFERRERS

OLA JORDAN
Strictly Come Dancing pro Olja, 32, has battled bad skin since she was 22. “I am a failure at hair and skin, I am afraid of it,” says Olja. “I was self-conscious about my skin and it made me feel insecure.”

BRITNEY SPEARS
Even Britney suffers from spots — not that fans would notice as they’re usually concealed by her team of make-up artists. Talking about her make-up routine, she revealed, “I really just wear mascara all the time. And powder, because I have oily skin.”

HARRY STYLES
Harry’s acne has been a source of concern for fans. “I am never going to have clear skin,” he admitted. “I really just wear makeup all the time.”

PILAR LOTT
The Strictly star, 33, suffers from acne, but she’s away from the spotlight.

VICTORIA BECKHAM
The mum of four has fought the war against acne for years, but she’s away from the spotlight.

‘EVERY DAY WITH ACNE WAS TRAUMATIC’

Zoe Barradell, 27, a project manager from Leicester, struggled with acne throughout her 20s...

“When I was a teenager, I thought I’d never escape acne. I never even wore foundation. But around the age of 20, I gradually noticed more spots. Now I realise it started when I began getting nightmares and changed my contraceptive pill. I started wearing more and more make-up and got to the point where I was wondering how I was going to cover all my acne up — it was really traumatic. I found some products, and I managed to conceal it. I’d tell friends how worried I was and they’d say ‘I would never have noticed.’ It’s not something you should feel embarrassed about...”

“During my holidays, I’d even wear tinted moisturiser, which is a big step for me. I felt strong enough to finally speak about it. I use a gel, a cream, a wipes...”

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