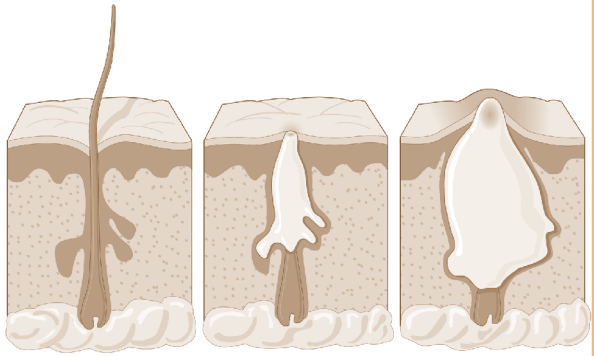
Acne

Acne is a skin condition. With acne you get pimples. The pimples can be white–heads, blackheads, or raised red ones that hurt. Acne can pop up on the shoulders, back, neck, and face. Acne mostly occurs in teenagers and young adults. Many people still have acne or acne scars when they are adults.



How acne forms.

You get acne when the glands under your skin make a certain kind of oil. The oil ducts get clogged and mix with **bacteria** on the skin. Then bumps pop up on the skin.

Babies 2 to 4 weeks old can get a little acne from their mother's hormones.

These things help cause acne:

- Hormone changes in teenagers.
- A girl's hormones before her period or when she is pregnant.
- Heavy lotions or greasy makeup.
- Stress.
- Vitamin pills that have iodine.
- Some medicines, such as steroids, and **lithium**.

Chocolate, nuts, greasy foods, and cola *do not* cause acne.

Self-Care Tips on next page treat mild acne. When this is not enough, your child's doctor can prescribe special creams, lotions, gels, or liquids. Ask the doctor for advice. *Don't* do anything special for a baby's acne. Just wash the skin gently.

For very bad acne, a doctor may prescribe a strong medicine, such as Accutane®. Know that this kind of medicine may lead to depression and even suicide. It can also cause birth defects.

Questions to Ask

With the acne, are there signs of infection, such as fever and swelling?
- YES → See Doctor
- NO

Does the acne cause scars and/or a lot of emotional problems?
- YES → See Doctor
- NO

Flowchart continued on next page

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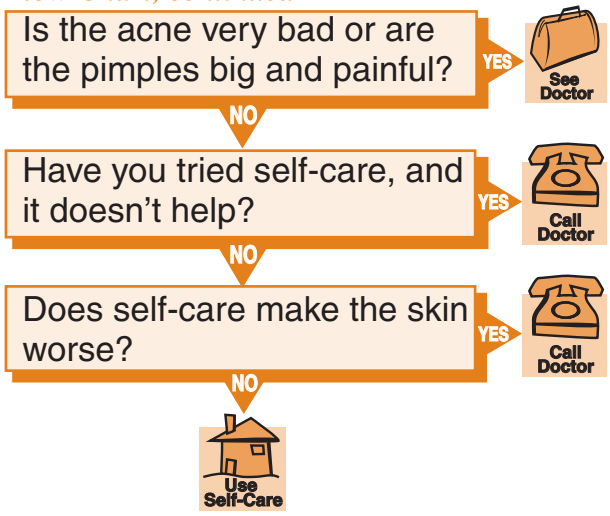
Flow Chart, continued



Self-Care Tips

- Keep the skin clean. Wash often with plain soap and water. Use a washcloth. Work the soap into the skin gently for a minute or two. Rinse well. Don't scrub.
- Have your child use a clean washcloth every day. **Bacteria** grow on a wet washcloth, and they can give your child more pimples.
- Have your child try an **astringent** lotion, degreasing pads, or a face scrub.
- Ask your child's doctor for the name of a good acne soap.
- Leave your child's skin alone! Tell your child not to squeeze, scratch, or poke at pimples. They can get infected and leave scars.
- Buy a lotion, cream, or soap that has **benzoyl peroxide**. Follow what the label states. (Some people are allergic to benzoyl peroxide. Try a little on your child's arm first to make sure it doesn't hurt the skin.)
- Have your child wash after he or she exercises and sweats.
- Have your child wash his or her hair at least every other day.
- Have your child use only water-based makeup. Don't let him or her use greasy or oily creams, lotions, or makeups.
- *Don't* let your child spend too much time in the sun.
- *Don't* let your child use a sun lamp.