

ACNE isn't just for teens

Here's what you should know

The American Academy of Dermatology found that 60 million Americans suffer from acne and that people of all ages and sexes are affected by the sometimes painful condition.

At least 20 percent of adults have active acne. Studies show that 25 percent of adult men and 50 percent of adult women have been troubled by it. The condition generally persists longer in women than in men, and can extend through the 20s and often into the 30s or even 40s for females.

EBONY wanted to learn more about adult acne, so we reached out to Victoria Holloway Barbosa, M.D., M.P.H., M.B.A., medical director of Millenium Park Dermatology in Chicago and co-author of the *Reader's Digest Guide to Skin Care*; and Charles E. Crutchfield III, M.D., director of Crutchfield Dermatology in Eagan, Minn., to get to the root of the problem.

IS ACNE FOREVER?

Barbosa: There is no cure for acne. We can do a very good job of managing it. If someone is prone to acne, we can keep it under control with different medications. Sooner or later, the acne will burn itself out.

SO AS ONE AGES, THERE IS A GOOD CHANCE THAT THE ACNE WILL COMPLETELY DISAPPEAR?

Crutchfield: For the most part, yes, however, I still have patients in their 50s and 60s who are dealing with adult-onset acne. But in general, as time goes on, it becomes less severe. Unfortunately, people don't want to wait 10, 20 or 30 years for acne to disappear. They want it gone yesterday.

WHY DO WOMEN HAVE ACNE LONGER THAN MEN?

Barbosa: A lot of it has to do with the hormonal changes. Part of the bacteria that is normal on the skin those with acne have more of because they have oily skin. The oil provides food for the bacteria. People with more oil tend to have more acne. For African-American women, our skin tends to be oilier. Research has documented this.

facts about over-the-counter medications

SALICYLIC ACID

- Concentration is generally 2 percent
- Not as irritating to skin as benzoyl peroxide

BENZOYL PEROXIDE

- Concentrations vary, up to 10 percent
- A bit more irritating to skin than salicylic acid

■ NOTE: No matter which one you try, **be sure to use in conjunction with a moisturizer that won't clog the pores to help balance the drying effects of the medication.**



what's
up,
Doc?



You ask and we find the answer

Q { **What causes stretch marks, and is it true that you can never get rid of them?**

Stretch marks happen when your body is growing faster than your skin can accommodate. During pregnancy, for instance, when you are likely to experience a rapid weight gain, the skin stretches way too rapidly. It's almost like scar marks from your skin overstretching—you're gaining weight or muscle mass too fast. If you are pregnant, modulate your food intake so you do not gain weight too rapidly. Moisturizer may be a preventive against stretch marks. You can lubricate and moisturize your skin with overall body moisturizers such as Keri Shea Butter Conditioning Therapy lotion; this is always a good thing. Your skin will be more pliable. Teenagers who get stretch marks get them because of rapid growth. Stretch marks can also be hereditary. They run more in some families than others. Is it possible for them to go away? No. Besides Fraxel, an advanced laser skin treatment, and occasionally with laser, they stay for life, like bad luggage. You can help them a little bit with topical glycolics and topical retinoids, which help to build collagen. Over time, creams can lighten them. Topicals do a little bit, but not a ton.

—Jeanine Downie, M.D., is a board-certified dermatologist who is the director of her own practice, Image Dermatology P.C., in Montclair, N.J. She is the co-author of *Beautiful Skin of Color*.

