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ACNE

By: Elisa Endicott, PA-C

Acne is one of the most common skin conditions treated in dermatology. It results in plugging of oil gland and their ducts with skin cells. The plug then combines with oil and bacteria which leads to inflammation which results in red pimples or deep cysts. If tissue is destroyed during this process, then permanent scarring will occur.

The onset of acne may begin as early as eight years of age with the greatest frequency between fifteen and eighteen years of age. Eighty-five percent of all teenagers experience some form of acne. Outbreaks may occur for months or years but typically subside by the age of twenty-five. In recent years, however, there has been an increase in adult onset acne. In this case, twenty to thirty-five year old women who did not experience acne during adolescence may begin forming acne lesions along the jaw, chin, and neck.

A variety of factors have been implicated in the case of acne. These include: heredity, hormones, oil based cosmetics, friction, and environmental factors.

Once the diagnosis has been made there are a variety of treatment options available based on the types of acne, including oral antibiotics and topical creams and gels. The purpose of treatment is two fold. Prevention of scarring is one reason, due to the permanence of scarring. The second reason is the psychological issues surrounding acne. Treatment may take up to twelve weeks before improvement is noted, but it is effective in over ninety percent of cases.

