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DOCTALK



Make the acnes disappear



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Acne is a common skin disease that affects 85-90 per cent of people at some time during their lives. It affects the area of the skin with densest popular of sebaceous follicles — the face, upper chest, upper back and arms. There are several causes for acne like genetic factors; endocrine disorders such as CAH (cong adrenal hyperplasia), PCOD, which leads to increased androgen secretion; drugs like lithium, anti-epileptics, steroids, iodides, etc. Also, certain cosmetic agents like hair pomades can worsen acne.

How to treat acne

■ **Self-care at home:** Wash the face twice to thrice a day with soap or a mild cleanser to remove dust and excess oil from the skin. Avoid picking at the acne / scrubbing hard which causes more inflammation and damage. Also, use make-up, cosmetics labelled with the word 'non-comedogenic', which means it does not cause or increase acne.

■ **Medical treatment:** Depend-

ing on the severity (or grade of acne), treatment options are available. For 'milder' acne (Grade I, II — comedones, papules-non-inflammatory), topical gels and lotions are effective. Whereas for 'moderate to severe' acne (Grade III, IV), oral antibiotics with topical therapy may be necessary. Over-the-counter drugs help treat milder acne. Many contain benzoyl peroxide, which helps in getting rid of the acne-causing bacteria and also causes dryness and flaking of the skin that can help prevent the skin pores from becoming clogged. Antibiotics may be applied to the skin in the form of gels / lotions/ creams or also taken orally. Retinoids are medicines made from vit A. Topical retinoids are useful in comedogenic acne. Often causing mild dryness



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of the face, they help open clogged pores by creating a mild peeling effect. For severe forms of acne, oral retinoids are prescribed which have a peeling effect along with reduction-in sebum / oil production. They have a number of side effects such as dryness, increased blood fats (hypertriglyceridemia), depression, increased liver enzymes, etc. Take these medicines only on medical advice.

■ **Chemical peels:** It is a procedure in which upper dead layers of skin are removed by applying a chemical on the skin. It also regenerates new skin cells from underneath. These chemicals are obtained from various fruits and food products like glycolic acid from sugarcane, lactic acid from sour milk, malic acid from apples. It helps decrease the intensity and number of pimples and decreases chances of post-acne scarring.

■ **Skin polishing or Microdermabrasion (MDA)** is a procedure used for epidermal resurfacing. To abrade the skin without pain and removing the upper dead, damaged layer of the skin, two techniques are used — crystal and diamond. In the crystal method, microcrystals of aluminium oxide are propelled forcefully on the skin and sucked away simultaneously which take off the upper dead skin layers. It happens very fast within fraction of a few seconds. For diamond treatment, a diamond probe with suction is moved on your face to abrade the outer layer. It is effective for any type of skin as well as ageing and is mostly used for mild acne scars and pigmentation.

■ **Laser skin rejuvenation:** Laser is an intense form of light energy, which can be used to treat active acne, pigmentation and acne scars. Fractional lens improves safety of lasers in Asian skin and prevents damage to skin surface (like burns) during treatment.