



**Texas Children's Hospital
Dermatology Service
PCP Referral Guidelines- Acne**

Diagnosis/Symptom : **ACNE**

* For mild to moderately severe acne, please follow appropriate guidelines below for at least 3 months prior to initiation of referral.

* For severe/nodulocystic/scarring acne, please begin maximum therapy outlined below and initiate referral.

Treatment includes:

- EDUCATION! Medications often take months to work so exercise patience.
 - o Also, skin may get “worse” (dryness, redness from medications) before it gets better. The skin usually adapts so they should stick with their prescribed medications!
- Development of a daily skin care regimen to prevent acne breakouts after treatment of initial flares.
 - o Patients should use oil-free, non-comedogenic hair and skin care practices.
- Avoidance of trauma (no picking or squeezing acne bumps). Body Wash & OTC Acne Treatment (see page 3)
- Compliance: your patients will not get better if they do not use the medications prescribed.
- Therapy recommendations based on degree of acne severity.
 - o Recent guidelines indicate that ALL patients be placed on a topical retinoid with other medications added based on severity or therapeutic response. Acne Table (page 2)

Basic Skin Care:

1. Wash skin gently 1-2 times per day.
2. Apply oil-free moisturizer to skin as needed for dryness.
3. Apply oil-free sunscreen daily.
4. When using moisturizer and/or sunscreen, medications should be applied first.

How to Apply Topical Medications:

1. Skin should be clean and dry.
2. A pea-sized amount of medication should be used to cover the entire face.



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MILD COMEDONAL (mainly comedones)

Mild topical retinoid at night:

Differin 0.1% lotion or cream (0.1% gel if skin is very oily)

Tretinoin cream 0.025%

Retin A microgel 0.04%

MILD MIXED (comedones and a few inflammatory lesions)

Mild topical retinoid at night:

Differin 0.1% lotion or cream (0.1% or 0.3% gel if skin is very oily)

Tretinoin cream 0.025%, 0.05%

Retin A microgel 0.04%, 0.1%

AND

Benzaclin gel in the morning

MODERATE TO EARLY SEVERE MIXED (many comedones and inflammatory lesions)

Stronger topical retinoid at night:

Tretinoin cream 0.05%, 0.1% (0.01% or 0.025% gel if skin is very oily)

Retin A microgel 0.1%

*Tazorac cream 0.05%, 0.1% (0.05% or 0.1% gel if skin is very oily)

(*Tazorac is Pregnancy Category X medication and cannot be used by anyone who is pregnant.)

AND

Benzaclin gel in the morning

AND

Oral antibiotic:

Doxycycline 100mg mg po bid

Minocycline 50-100 mg po bid

*consider gels for oily skin

*creams for dry/sensitive skin

*since all topical acne products can be irritating, gentle cleansers and moisturizers are often recommended for sensitive-skin patients

Cleansers and Facial Moisturizers (see page 3)



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SEVERE (cysts, nodules, evidence of scarring)

- Referral likely necessary and suggested if poor response to “moderate acne” treatment after 3 months.

When to initiate referral:

- Cysts or nodules present and/or scarring is occurring despite treatment
- Acne is associated with signs of androgen excess or part of a systemic disease

TABLE 1. Acne types and treatment

Type of acne	First line	Alternatives	Alternatives for women	Maintenance
Mild comedonal	Topical retinoid	Salicylic acid		Topical retinoid ± BPO or BPO/AB
Mild papular/pustular	Topical retinoid + BPO or BPO/antibiotic			Topical retinoid ± BPO or BPO/AB
Moderate papular/pustular	Topical retinoid + oral antibiotic + BPO or BPO/AB or adapalene at night		Hormonal therapy + topical retinoid ± BPO or BPO/AB	Topical retinoid ± BPO or BPO/AB
Severe, nodular	Oral isotretinoin	Oral antibiotic + topical retinoid + BPO or BPO/AB	Hormonal therapy + oral AB + topical retinoid ± BPO or BPO/AB	Topical retinoid ± BPO or BPO/AB

AB, topical antibiotic; BPO, benzoyl peroxide.
Adapted from Gollnick et al. (2003).



1. Product Recommendations for Acne-Prone Skin

Body Wash (for chest and back acne)

Neutrogena Body Clear Body Wash (salicylic acid)
PanOxyl Acne Cleansing Bar (5% or 10% benzoyl peroxide)
Pan Oxyl Foaming Wash (10% benzoyl peroxide)

Cleansers

Purpose Gentle Cleansing Bar
Purpose Gentle Cleansing Wash (pump)
Neutrogena Fresh Foaming Cleanser (pump)
Olay Foaming Face Wash (pump)
Olay Gentle Foaming Face Wash (pump)
Cetaphil Antibacterial Soap (bar)

Facial Moisturizers

Cetaphil UVA/UVB Defense Facial Moisturizer (SPF 50)
Neutrogena Healthy Defense (SPF 30 or 45)
Neutrogena Oil-Free Moisture (SPF 15)
Olay Complete (SPF 20)
Olay Complete Defense (SPF 30)

Over the Counter Acne Treatment

Clearasil Daily Acne Control Cream (10% benzoyl peroxide)
Clearasil Maximum Strength Acne Treatment (10% benzoyl peroxide)
Clearasil Ultra Rapid Action Treatment Cream (10% benzoyl peroxide)
Clean and Clear Persa Gel-10, Maximum Strength (10% benzoyl peroxide)
Clean and Clear Invisible Blemish Treatment, Maximum Strength (2% salicylic acid)
Neutrogena Rapid Clear 2 in 1 Fight & Fade Gel (salicylic acid)