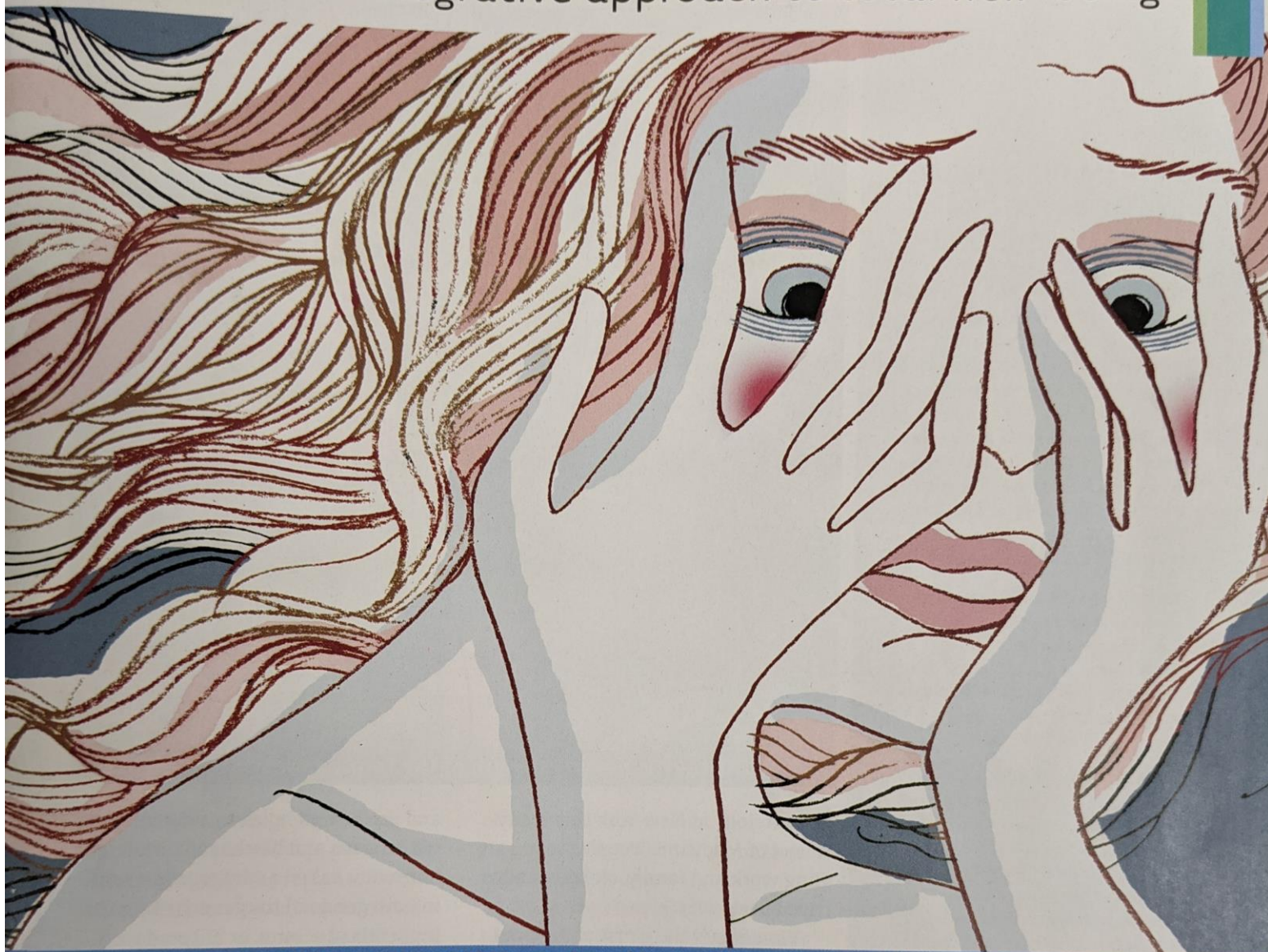


# Good Medicine

the integrative approach to total well-being



CAN'T FACE THE MIRROR? To see clear skin, combine natural and dermatological strategies.

## staring down acne

*Adult acne is on the rise, and its effects can be painful and demoralizing. Here are 45 strategies to help you break free of breakouts.*

**Y**O, HAS YOUR FACE gone, like, totally retro? Is your skin a zit pit? Acne isn't just for teenagers anymore—and there's a special misery to breaking out when you're 37 and fretting about crow's-feet.

"The vast majority of people once outgrew adolescent acne, except for an unlucky few," says Richard Fried, M.D.,

a dermatologist and clinical psychologist in Yardley, Pa., and author of *Healing Adult Acne*. "Now about half of adults deal with acne in some form, and many who never had significant acne develop it for the first time."

So what's responsible for the jump in grown-up acne? Pollution, new medications, and hormone-fed meats are among the irritants cited. "The one common denominator we see among adult acne patients, however, is stress," says Linda K. Franks, M.D., assistant clinical professor of

By R. DANIEL FOSTER

Illustration by MONICA HELLSTRÖM



## A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH

Nearly all health philosophies have treatments for acne. Here are three to consider.

**Ayurveda** links acne to two of three *doshas* (constitutions): *pittas* (quick, passionate, high achievers) with sensitive skin, and *kaphas* (deliberate, compassionate, grounded) with oily skin. Cool, creative *vatas* tend toward drier skin, though some people are *tridosha*, and deal with combination skin. Practitioners advise careful blending of foods, spices, and oils for proper digestion, along with breathing, massage, and yoga.

Try this preparation for pitta and kapha skin: Mix 5 powdered grams each of neem, turmeric, amla, sandalwood, and multani mitti with 5 to 10 milliliters of water to create a paste. Apply in the morning and evening, let dry, then wash.

In **homeopathy**, most acne treatments contain microdose dilutions of calendula, echinacea, berberis, arnica, belladonna, and/or sulfur. Products like Nelsons Acne Gel or Hyland's ClearAc are available, or a homeopath may suggest a remedy for a person's overall constitution that addresses numerous issues. Acne associated with hormonal imbalance is often treated with pulsatilla or kali brom.

**Traditional Chinese Medicine** links the skin to the lungs, as they help spread fluid through the body. A practitioner seeks to harmonize the lung meridian, and to draw heat away from energy channels that lead to the face. Acupuncture points include areas on the elbow, between the thumb and forefinger, and above the inner kneecap.



LIGHT THERAPY is the wavelength of the future for acne treatment.

dermatology at New York University School of Medicine. "People are juggling work and family, and generally have busier lives."

Women get the worst of it: About 54 percent of adult females are afflicted with acne, compared to 40 percent of adult males. Chalk up the difference to age-related hormonal changes (which are exacerbated by stress), more oil production, birth-control use, pregnancy, stress, and menopause.

To add inconvenience to injury, the pimples may act the same, but the skin does not. Drier and less resilient, an adult woman's skin can be easily damaged by some of the treatments she may have relied on during her adolescence.

## taking root

ALL ACNE ORIGINATES in hair follicles, which either become inflamed

and produce pimples, or plug up with whiteheads and blackheads. Male hormones called androgens (present in both genders) trigger acne by raising levels of sebum, or oil, produced by sebaceous glands at the base of these follicles. Hair is normally softened and lubricated by oil, but excess amounts paired with dead-skin-cell buildup cause blockage. When bacteria are present, the follicle becomes irritated, forming pustules.

Some people simply produce more sebum and have greater numbers of sebaceous glands. Others have a poorer rate of skin-cell turnover and are more sensitive to hormones. And acne is partly tied to genes: If your parents battled acne, the odds are, so do you.

Only 7 percent to 14 percent of adults suffer from chronic, "clinically significant" acne. Yet even sporadic



## SUPPLEMENT YOUR SKIN

Getting enough antioxidants and other beneficial substances through a balanced diet and supplements regimen can keep your skin acne-resistant, according to Terry J. Dubrow, M.D., author of *The Acne Cure*. He suggests a handful of complexion-assisting vitamins and minerals, plus the amino acid L-carnitine. Additionally, vitamin A can reduce sebum production but only in extremely high doses available by prescription. To be safe, consult your physician about any changes in your diet or supplement program.

What	Why	How much
Vitamin C	Defends against infections and repairs damaged tissues.	1,000 mg (or more) a day
Vitamin E	Improves the body's ability to absorb vitamin A; helps repair skin damage.	400 IU a day
Vitamin B complex	Modulates hormone metabolism; reduces inflammation; aids the immune system.	100 mg a day
Alpha lipoic acid	Reduces inflammation; protects collagen.	100 mg a day
L-carnitine	Repairs skin damage from sun and acne.	1,000 mg a day
Calcium	Assists cardiovascular function and muscle contraction.	1,000 mg a day
Magnesium	Helps build blood vessels; relieves premenstrual symptoms.	200 mg a day
Chromium	Enhances the effects of insulin to help stabilize blood sugar.	200 mcg a day
Selenium	Potent antioxidant that enhances vitamins A and E.	200 mcg a day
Zinc	Aids wound healing and collagen maintenance; may help acne scars heal.	15 mg a day

outbreaks have a high emotional cost. "Studies show that a person can be as profoundly depressed with one zit on her chin a month as someone with a face full of acne," says Fried. "We've seen women who feel burdened, imperfect, and unattractive in their 40s and 50s because of acne, and data show that those with acne suffer from higher rates of divorce, unemployment, suicide, and sexual dysfunction. Acne is not trivial."

The most common form of acne is acne vulgaris, but there are other types caused by irritants such as heat and humidity or exposure to certain pesticides. In the worst cases, cysts can form deep beneath the skin and result in scarring.

Nancy, a 45-year-old medical biller from Massachusetts, had to cope with painful cystic acne throughout her teens and 20s. She went on and

off oral antibiotics, which slow bacteria growth. "But it never permanently went away," she says.

At 29, she enrolled in a six-month plan of supplements and balanced meals devised by Georgianna Donadio, Ph.D., founder and program director of the National Institute of Whole Health. "After six months," Nancy says, "I was pulling the hair away from my face for the first time, and people were saying how much my complexion had improved."

## the food factor

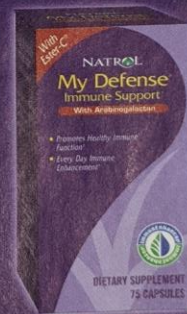
"A POOR DIET really affects the liver," says Donadio. "The liver dampens and tempers the intensity of androgen hormones, which trigger oil production in the sebaceous glands."

While a 1969 landmark study seemed to prove there is no causal link between diet and acne, a 2002



Stopping Stop kissing Stop hugging you  
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Stop using public transportation Stop  
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