

## Cystic Acne

Cystic acne is a severe and painful form of acne that occurs when the pores in the skin become blocked with dead skin cells, oil (sebum), and bacteria. Unlike regular pimples or whiteheads, cystic acne is characterized by large, deep, and inflamed cysts or nodules that can be filled with pus. These cysts are often red or purple and can lead to significant discomfort and scarring.

**Causes:** Cystic acne is primarily caused by an overproduction of oil (sebum) in the sebaceous glands, which can mix with dead skin cells and bacteria, leading to the formation of a plug in the hair follicle. This creates an ideal environment for bacteria to thrive, leading to inflammation and the development of cysts. Hormonal imbalances, particularly during puberty, pregnancy, or certain medical conditions, can also contribute to cystic acne. Genetics, diet, and stress levels can play a role as well.

**Treatment:** Treating cystic acne can be challenging, and it's recommended to seek advice from a dermatologist for a tailored approach. Some common treatment options include:

1. **Topical treatments:** Prescription-strength creams, gels, or lotions containing ingredients like retinoids, benzoyl peroxide, or antibiotics can help reduce inflammation and control bacterial growth.
2. **Oral medications:** In more severe cases, oral antibiotics, oral contraceptives (for females), or anti-androgen medications may be prescribed to regulate hormones and reduce inflammation.
3. **Isotretinoin:** This potent oral medication, often referred to as Accutane, is typically used for severe cystic acne that hasn't responded to other treatments. It works by reducing oil production and preventing acne formation, but it has potential side effects and requires close monitoring by a healthcare professional.
4. **Corticosteroid injections:** For large and painful cysts, a dermatologist may administer corticosteroid injections to reduce inflammation and promote healing.
5. **Avoiding trigger factors:** Identifying and avoiding triggers such as certain foods (e.g., high-glycemic index foods), cosmetics, or environmental factors that worsen acne can be beneficial.
6. **Proper skincare:** A gentle skincare routine using non-comedogenic products can help maintain healthy skin and prevent further irritation.

7. Avoid squeezing or picking: It's essential to resist the urge to squeeze or pick at cystic acne as it can worsen inflammation and increase the risk of scarring.

Remember, treating cystic acne often requires patience and consistency, and it may take some time to see significant improvements. If you're struggling with cystic acne, don't hesitate to consult a dermatologist for personalized advice and treatment.

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