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BEAUTY AT ANY AGE

Beat It, BLEMISHES!

Acne? At this age? While everything from Ho Hos to pregnancy can make your face look like you're 40 going on 14, doctors say the right cocktail of ingredients will clear things up

20s

Oil glands are still on overdrive, meaning "if you had acne as a teen, you'll likely still have flare-ups in this decade," says N.Y.C. dermatologist Julie Karen. Your best daily defense: salicylic acid—in both your cleanser and moisturizer. The ingredient "dives deep into pores, clearing the dead cells and trapped oil that cause breakouts," says Wellesley, Mass., dermatologist Rachel Herschenfeld. Target pimples at night with a benzoyl-peroxide treatment, which wages war on zit-causing bacteria.

Clear Start Breakout Clearing Foaming Wash, \$19; clearstart.com. Proactiv+ Emergency Blemish Relief (with benzoyl peroxide), \$46; discoverproactiv.com.



30s

Stress, your diet, and "forgetting" to wash your face at night can all bring on breakouts, and so can pregnancy hormones that stimulate oil production. But the power duo of benzoyl peroxide and salicylic acid that zapped zits in your 20s can irritate your slightly older, slightly drier skin, notes N.Y.C. dermatologist Debra Jaliman. Try switching to a lightweight, non-comedogenic moisturizer, and target individual pimples with a benzoyl-peroxide cream, like this one from La Roche-Posay, which also packs exfoliating LHA (lipohydroxy acid), suggests N.Y.C. dermatologist Joshua Zeichner.

Neutrogena Hydro Boost Water Gel, \$18; at drugstores. La Roche-Posay Effaclar Duo Dual Action Acne Treatment (with LHA), \$37; at drugstores.



40s

You can officially blame your acne on hormones. As you begin perimenopause, estrogen drops but testosterone stays the same, says N.Y.C. dermatologist Arielle Kauvar. This imbalance boosts oil production, with resulting breakouts. However, your skin is still drier overall, so continue to lay off the benzoyl peroxide and salicylic acid-fueled washes and moisturizers. Use a p.m. retinol cream, which can help your cause by prompting cell turnover, says Dr. Zeichner. If pimples pop up, treat them with a sulfur-based solution, which will likely be better tolerated by your skin.

Kate Somerville EradiKate Mask (with sulfur), \$54; at Sephora. Roc Retinol Correxion Sensitive Night Cream, \$23; at Walmart.



50s+

If you're still seeing spots, see a dermatologist. "Often a patient complaining of acne at this age actually has rosacea," says Mary Lupo, dermatology professor at Tulane University School of Medicine. If that's the case, she advises substituting your regular cleanser with a gentler formula, like the soy-based option shown here, to help battle rosacea-related inflammation. Going for a lighter, non-comedogenic hydrator over a potentially pore-clogging night cream can also help prevent pimples near menopause.

Aveeno Clear Complexion Foaming Cleanser, \$7; at drugstores. SkinCeuticals Hydrating B5 Gel, \$78; skinceuticals.com.



**IN-OFFICE
PROCEDURES**

OUT, DAMNED SPOT!

It's lasers to the rescue for red marks or pits left behind after breakouts gone by.

**FOR ACNE SCARS:
FRAXEL**

What it is A noninvasive laser treatment that heats up a deep layer of skin, stimulating new collagen formation to plump up scars and smooth the surface. **Results** Once redness and peeling fade, you'll see less scarring in about two weeks to a month after a treatment. Depending on the number and depth of scars, marks may not completely disappear until you've done a series of sessions. **Cost** It varies but can run around \$1,500 per treatment. **Pain factor** Expect either no sensation or mild discomfort during the session. **Downtime** There will be redness for a couple of days, with some flaking to follow. **For more info** Fraxel.com.

**FOR POST-ACNE RED SPOTS:
CANDELA VBEAM PERFECTA**

What it is A pulsed dye laser that blasts an intense burst of light into skin to get rid of the blood vessels creating redness. **Results** Within a day you may see some improvement in tone, but the best results typically come after three to four treatments over the course of six weeks, says Dr. Kauvar. **Cost** It varies, but think upwards of \$500 per treatment. **Pain factor** You may feel the equivalent of a rubber band snapping against skin. **Downtime** You'll be red for several hours, with mild swelling the next day. **For more info** Syneron-candela.com.