

Treating Body Acne

Back and chest acne is a problem that most people don't give too much thought about, unless of course they have it. After all, it's not as bad as having it on your face. Well, true, but for those who suffer from back acne it means that women can't wear a backless gown to a special night out, a bathing suit to the beach or a tank top to the gym.

It's not just the unsightly aspect of acne and acne scars that makes it so embarrassing; there's a terrible stigma that goes with it. Recently, a client told me that someone at a mall blurted out to her, "ever hear of soap?" That insensitive person obviously didn't know that washing all day every day will not help acne one little bit; and most people afflicted with acne wash their skin far more than the average person.

If you suffer from back acne, I've got some good news and some bad news. The bad news is that it can be tricky to treat and antibiotics from the dermatologist, aren't going to get the job done. However, the good news is that the skin on your chest and back is not nearly as sensitive as the skin on your face and neck. Consequently, it can be treated with topical acne treatment products that are just too strong for those areas. When the right products are used in the right way, we can clear it up quite quickly.

Before we continue, I must warn you that you should not try to treat yourself with the following products at home without the guidance of a skin care professional. The primary objective is to exfoliate the dead skin cells that are clogging the pore. This can be done with glycolic acid serum in the 15 - 30% potency range. Another product that is very effective in treating stubborn, non-inflamed acne, but relatively unknown, is Lactobase A, a product developed by Dr. James Fulton and under patent by his company, Vivant Skin Care. If your back acne is inflamed; meaning red, cystic, pustular, sometimes painful or hot to the touch, a good option is 10% benzoyl peroxide with 3% sulfur. None of these acne treatment products are very expensive, and that's a relief because there is a lot more surface to cover on you back and chest.

Another acne related problem is keratosis pilaris, often referred to as chicken skin. It is usually found on the back of the arms and can be treated the same as back acne. Though not technically acne, it also is a result of clogged pores so that area of the skin needs to be exfoliated. The skin on the back of your arms is more sensitive than on your back and chest, so you have to be a little less aggressive with the topicals.

Don't be surprised if your dermatologist or esthetician is not familiar with these treatments; acne and especially back acne is widely misunderstood and mistreated. In fact, often times, what is thought to be chest and back acne, is actually a fungus which can be treated with dandruff shampoo. The condition is called pityrosporum folliculitis and acne treatments can make it worse. So before you start using acne treatment products for back acne, chest acne, or acne scars, make sure that's what you have.