

# What are the Types of Acne?

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Acne can be generally categorized into three groups. Acne vulgaris is the most common form that plagues the skin, and is usually considered mild to moderate in severity. Whiteheads, or closed comedones are formed when a pore is completely blocked and the oil (or sebum), bacteria and dead skin cells are trapped under the skin causing a white appearance on the surface.

Blackheads, or open comedones, are formed when a pore is only partially blocked, allowing some of the sebum, bacteria and dead skin cells to escape to the skin's surface. The dark color is the body's melanin reacting with oxygen in the air.

Then you have papules, tender, small rounded, red bumps that are inflamed without a head; pustules which are inflamed red circles with white or yellow centers, the common pimple or zit that is most identified with types of acne. More severe types are nodules and cysts. Nodules occupy a larger area of the skin than the other types of acne mentioned above. They are hard bumps under the skin's surface. Cysts can be painful because they are pus-filled.

The second of the major types of acne is acne rosacea. It appears similar to acne vulgaris but affects most people over the age of 30. These types of acne cause a red rash on the cheeks, nose, forehead, and chin. Papules and pustules can also accompany it, but blackheads are not categorized with this condition. Women seem to be affected by these types of acne more than men. If this left untreated, it can disfigure the nose causing swelling and the growth of excess tissue caused rhinophyma.

The last group is the most severe form and is rare and disfiguring. Acne conglobata is a condition that appears mostly in males from ages 18 to 30 years old. Numerous large lesions that are interconnected beneath the skin's surface characterize the most severe form of acne vulgaris. This is accompanied with blackheads that are found not only on the face, but also on most of the body. Acne fulminans is a type of acne similar to acne conglobata but it includes a fever and aching of the joints. Pyoderma faciale is a severe type of acne that affects females from ages 20 to 40 years old. It is characterized by large, painful nodules and pustules and is confined to the face. Though it only lasts about a year, it can cause severe scarring and skin damage.

Mild types of acne can be treated with over-the-counter formulas that clear the pores of the skin, such as salicylic acid. Benzoyl Peroxide fights the acne bacteria in the skin and is also effective at controlling mild to moderate types of acne. A dermatologist might prescribe a prescription medicine such as Erythromycin to work at killing bacteria from the inside.

For severe forms of most types of acne or if other treatments have not worked, Accutane or Isotretinoin is prescribed. It is a pill taken orally that decreases the amount of sebum that the glands produce. It is taken for about 6 months and is known to clear skin of virtually all types of acne. But, severe side effects can occur, including birth defects; close observation by a physician during treatment is required.

David Bloom is an avid health enthusiast and a regular contributor to a variety of health websites. He is the author of Types of Acne and Treatment, a blog dedicated to the treatment of acne, covering conventional and natural remedies for clearing up blemished skin.

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