

# Effective Acne Treatments

## KEY WORDS

acne, pimples, blemishes, skin, lactoferrin, intestinal flora, bacteria, sulfur, sulphur, vitamin B6, P-5-P, pyridoxal 5 phosphate, vitamin A, retinyl acetate, vitamin C, zinc, potassium, *Propionibacterium acnes*, *P. acnes*

Face the world. Put on your game face. Face the music. Poker face. Face off. Even Facebook. Your face communicates your identity to the world. Think about it – every single sensory organ is located on your face. Of all your body parts, your face has a powerful and unique place as your interface (no pun intended!) to the world. When people suffer from acne, it is not merely vanity that makes them desire to clear their skin and reduce blemishes. It is a powerful need to have our face radiate health, and to put our best “face” forward.

Acne is one of the most common – and most distressing – health issues involving the skin. If you suffer from acne outbreaks, you’re not alone. Over 80% of all people between 11 and 30 years old experience acne problems. And when you go shopping to find a solution, the shelves in most drugstores are lined with creams, lotions, and alcohol-based cleansers. Unfortunately, that’s part of the problem – some of these do more harm than good.

Healthy skin doesn’t begin from the outside in, it begins from the inside out. It begins with the right food and drink, with a healthy digestive tract, and with supplemental nutrients. I want to discuss with you some powerful supplements that can have a tremendous impact on acne.

## Treating Acne

You may have always had problems with acne, or may have just had an outbreak recently and figured that you were “too old to have to worry about this.” But that’s one of the common myths about the “whys” behind acne. While it is more typical in younger people due to shifts in hormone levels, acne can be common at *any* age.

Beyond the hormonal changes that affect healthy skin are the everyday exposures to sun damage and wind, and oxidative stress that challenges the way our body reacts. But you’re not likely to find effective acne over-the-counter medicines and ointments. Most work by killing bacteria to reduce blemishes,

but lose their effectiveness over time as the bacteria builds resistance. Also, not only are a lot of topical treatments unduly harsh on your skin, they don’t address two of the main factors that can really help clear acne: **skin health** and **gut health**.

We need nutrients to help heal our skin, which is the largest organ of the body. But we also need to balance the alkaline levels and bacteria in our bodies that create an environment for acne. Fortunately, there are natural ingredients that can help.

## Nutrients That Work

The skin is a fascinating part of our body. It protects us, allows nutrients to pass through, helps synthesize vitamin D from sunlight, and helps the body detoxify. Of course, when skin doesn’t *appear* healthy, it can be a sign of nutrient deficiencies and imbalances.

The pores in our skin connect to glands under the skin that produce a substance called “sebum”. Sebum is an oily substance and it carries dead skin cells through the canals to the surface of the skin, where we wash them away. Sometimes the canals fill up with a combination of the oil, skin cells, and even hair. Bacteria, specifically *Propionibacterium acnes* (or *P. acnes*), on the surface of the skin feed on this conglomeration or “plug”. They are attracted especially to the dead skin cells, and their activity begins to inflame and irritate the surrounding tissue.

Hormones can make the oil glands clog up even more – an imbalance of hormones sends a lot of our normal body processes out of whack, so it’s understandable that younger people tend to get acne more than folks over 30. In fact, about 80% of people between the ages of 11 and 30 will have at least one bout of acne. Let’s look more closely at nutrients that can help.

**Sulfur:** Sulfur is not scary. It’s an essential mineral present in most protein-rich foods, including meats, nuts, and eggs. (In fact, if you eat a lot of eggs and pass gas, you may note a sulfur-like scent. That’s because of the sulfur inherent in eggs!) Many vegetables are high in sulfur, as are coffee and tea.

It can be easy to confuse **sulfur** with **sulfa** because they are similar-sounding words. However, they are not related. “Sulfa” is a class of drugs called “sulfonamides.” These synthetic drugs are not the mineral sulfur. Sulfur (The Latin spelling is “sulphur” so both are correct) is widespread throughout your body and necessary for a huge variety of physiological functions, and is an absolute must as an ingredient in any acne-

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fighting regimen. It has been used for generations as a natural acne fighter. It helps balance the oil levels in the skin to prevent pores from becoming clogged.

**Vitamin A:** Did you know that if you’re deficient in vitamin A, you’re more susceptible to infections? And that’s really what acne is – a bacterial overload in the pores, and on the surface of the skin. Vitamin A supports the immune system to help drive out bad bacteria from the body, and also supports the way the body produces the outermost layer of the skin, called ‘keratinization.’ Not all forms of vitamin A are as potent for this function – the retinyl acetate form of vitamin A works the best.

**Vitamin C:** This is a required nutrient for *any* healthy skin regimen. Vitamin C is amazing. Vitamin C fights oxidative stress – the cell-destroying effect of free radicals – and promotes wound healing and healthy tissue development, including skin. Overall, this natural wonder is possibly the most crucial antioxidant you can get. But because we’re used to having vitamin C enhanced foods, it’s easy to take this vitamin for granted. In addition to being a potent antioxidant, it detoxifies carcinogens and other toxins in foods and in the digestive tract – an important element in fighting acne naturally. As an immune booster, it follows that vitamin C can help keep out “invaders”, and the bacteria that propels acne formation definitely qualifies as one of them.

**Vitamin B6:** I recommend vitamin B6 in the pyridoxal-5-phosphate or “P-5-P” form, because this is the bioidentical, active form of the nutrient. P-5-P works *especially* well with zinc to keep the immune system

**More...**

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strong and vigilant against bacterial flare-ups. If you *do not* consume enough nutrients like P-5-P or zinc regularly, you could be making your natural defenses much more susceptible to a lot of immune challenges and hormone imbalances which could easily manifest itself as acne.

**Niacin:** A member of the B-vitamin family, niacin is another necessary ingredient for healthy tissue formation and to prevent oxidative damage to the cells. One of the most well-known consequences of niacin deficiency is the condition called pellagra. While not just confined to skin disorders (diarrhea and cognitive issues are also a result), pellagra manifests itself as lesions on skin's surface – especially the face, arms and hands – anyplace that has the most sun exposure. It starts as a rash and later progresses to glossy red lesions. While niacin deficiencies of that scale are rare for us in these modern times, the need for niacin for healthy skin is still as important as ever.

**Zinc:** Zinc helps protect the skin's barrier function – its ability to resist toxins and other threats to the immune system. It also promotes tissue healing and response to bacteria. For this reason, those without enough zinc in their regimens may find that cuts and abrasions seem to stick around much longer than they should. Zinc supports hormonal balance, too, which is so necessary to preventing the overabundance of androgen in the body – another key cause of acne.

**Potassium:** This essential mineral does a lot of things for us. It helps keep blood pressure in check and has anti-carcinogenic effects, which helps us fight toxins in the environment. But is also a much needed alkalizing mineral that helps keep our natural acid/alkaline balance in order. Along with muscle weakness and fatigue, acne is another sign of potassium deficiency.

## Supporting the Gut Supports the Face?

There is a very strong but often-overlooked connection between the health of the gut and skin health. That's a bit odd in my opinion, considering how important the balance of good versus bad bacteria is for our overall health, but I think because we tend to consider the skin an "outside" problem, the very thought of the digestive system being involved never occurs to us.

For example, it's getting to be popular to say right now that "sugar doesn't cause acne." Well, I'm not so sure. It may be fair to say that sugar doesn't "directly" cause acne, sugar definitely affects hormone levels, inflammation, and bacteria

(especially gut flora) balance in the body, and those are three big contributors to acne.

That's why I think one of the most effective gut-supporting ingredients is **lactoferrin**. Lactoferrin is an iron-binding protein with strong antibacterial and immune-supporting abilities. And, beyond being a strong antioxidant, lactoferrin helps prevent inflammation as well.

But one of the reasons I strongly recommend lactoferrin in any natural acne-fighting regimen is that it is so good at reducing the bad bacteria that can build up in the digestive system. It's a fairly well-known truth that digestive system health equals overall health, and when you're dealing with acne, that holds just as true.

Lactoferrin helps balance good bacteria and rid the body of bad bacteria (which thrives on sugar). One of the ways it does this is by binding iron. (The word "lactoferrin" really breaks down into two sections, "lacto" – from milk, and "ferrin" having to do with iron or "ferrous".) Aside from sugar, bacteria thrive on free iron, too. Lactoferrin binds to iron, keeping it from 'feeding' bacteria and encouraging its growth.

A recent clinical study explored the correlation between lactoferrin and acne reduction quite well. In this 12-week trial, half of the group took lactoferrin daily, while the other half used probiotics (the bacteria cultures you find in yogurt).

Acne lesions and acne 'grade' or severity was measured at the beginning of the trial, at monthly visits, and then assessed at the end of the study. Researchers looked at skin moisture and hydration, sebum content, pH levels, and the skin surface lipids.

At the end of 12 weeks, the lactoferrin group showed *great* improvement – the amount of inflammatory lesions decreased by 38.6%, total lesions decreased by 23.1%, and the acne severity (grade) decreased by 20.3%! The amount of sebum – the oily substance produced under the skin that can clog pores – also decreased in the lactoferrin group by 31.1% as well. It just shows how the health of the gut and the appearance and the skin really are interconnected.

## Have Patience

Part of avoiding acne and keeping the skin healthy is by making sure you have the nutrients on board that support the skin *and* the gut. Stick with the ingredients I've outlined here for at least 60 days. Some people will respond right away, in about 1 to 2 weeks,

but others need longer for the nutrients to do their job and start undoing the problems that lead to acne.

For even more complete healthy skin support, I'd also recommend sea buckthorn extract and a combination of bioavailable curcumin, green tea extract, and resveratrol. Sea buckthorn will supply a wide range of valuable omega fatty acids (including the rare omega-7 fatty acid) and the curcumin, green tea, and resveratrol extracts will fight inflammation, oxidative stress, and cellular damage that can prematurely age the skin.

Do not despair – you *can* have naturally attractive, healthy skin! The healthier you are on the inside, the more you will reflect it on the outside. These are strong ingredients, but they need time to heal your skin and bring your gut bacteria into balance again. It can be tough to wait, but be patient. It will be worth it! **TN**

### Terry recommends a product with these ingredients.

Vitamin A (as retinyl acetate)	5,000 IU
Vitamin C (as ascorbic acid)	50 mg
Vitamin B-6 (Pyridoxal-5-Phosphate)	5 mg
Niacin	5 mg
Zinc (Glycinate)	15 mg
Potassium (Chloride)	100 mg
Sulfur (sublimed)	100 mg
Lactoferrin (Freeze-dried)	50 mg

### Terry recommends a product with these ingredients.

Proprietary Complex	1,000 mg
Sea Buckthorn ( <i>Hippophae rhamnoides</i> L.) Oil (SBA 24) rich in phytosterols, tocopherols, tocotrienols and carotenoids; oil extracted in a specific ratio of berry pulp and seed oil, containing Omega 3, 6, 7 and 9 using supercritical CO2 extraction technology.	

### Terry recommends a product with these ingredients.

Proprietary Blend	412 mg
Curcumin Micronized ( <i>Curcuma longa</i> ) Rhizome Extract, phospholipids, turmeric essential oil, Green Tea ( <i>Camellia sinensis</i> ) standardized to contain >95% polyphenols, 75% catechins, and 40% EGCG (no caffeine), Resveratrol from <i>Polygonum cuspidatum</i> standardized to contain 8% total resveratrols.	