

## WHAT CAUSES ACNE

Almost all teenagers get acne at one time or another. You haven't done anything to cause your acne. It's not your fault if you have it. Pimples are caused when oil ducts in the skin get plugged up and then burst, causing redness and swelling. Although there are many myths about acne, the following are the three main factors that cause it.

### **1. Hormones**

When you begin puberty, certain hormones, called androgens, increase in both males and females. These hormones trigger oil ducts on the face, back and upper chest to begin producing oil. This can cause acne in some people.

### **2. Heredity**

If other members of your family had acne as teenagers, there may be a chance that you've inherited a tendency toward getting acne as well.

### **3. Plugged oil ducts**

If you are prone to acne, the cells that line the oil ducts in your skin tend to get larger and produce more oil, and the ducts get plugged. This traps the oil and leads to the formation of blackheads or whiteheads. The plugged ducts allow germs in the skin to multiply and produce chemicals that cause redness and swelling. This is why simple blackheads and whiteheads may turn red and bumpy and turn into the pimples of acne.

There is not much you can do about heredity, so your best control efforts are those that keep the oil ducts unplugged.

### **What doesn't cause acne?**

- Acne is not caused by foods you eat. Despite what you may have heard, there is no proof that soft drinks, chocolate and greasy foods cause acne.
- It's not caused by dirt. The black plug in a blackhead is caused by a chemical reaction. It's not dirt. No matter how carefully you wash your face, you can still have acne.
- It's not something you can "catch" or "give" to another person.
- It's not caused by sexual thoughts or masturbation.

### **What makes acne worse?**

- Pinching (or "popping") pimples, which forces oil from the oil ducts into the surrounding normal skin, causing redness and swelling
- Harsh scrubbing, which irritates the skin
- Things that rub on the skin, such as headbands, hats, hair and chin straps, which also cause irritation

- Certain cosmetics (makeup), such as creams and oily hair products, which can block oil ducts and aggravate acne
- Some medications
- For young women, changes in hormone levels brought on by menstrual periods
- Emotional stress and nervous tension