

'I found the right pill': Woman's before-and-after-birth-control photos showing off her clear skin are incredible

Reddit is filled with before-and-after pictures, but one pair in particular has gone viral. In the photos, a young woman is shown with bad acne and again with incredibly clear skin — and the difference is amazing.

“2015 vs 2017. My skin has been better for a while (shout out to the pill) but seeing this old photo compared to a new one (where I’m not even wearing make up) made me so happy I just had to share it somewhere!!” wrote Ellie Mahan. Her post has since had nearly 25,000 upvotes and 597 comments from people who were seriously impressed with the results.

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Mahan later told a commenter that the change is really all due to her birth control. “It literally was just hormonal/stress-triggered for me, so when I found the right pill (and I did go through a couple of types) it just changed very quickly!” she wrote. “When the actual acne had gone, I used Bio-Oil for the scars. It’s so specific for everyone and I tried many different things but honestly it was just a fluke that I found something that worked.”

Mahan, a college student from England, tells Yahoo Lifestyle that her skin was always “pretty bad,” but when she went to college, it flared up. “It was worse than in the initial picture,” the 21-year-old says. Her skin improved slightly when she went on one form of birth control, but it didn’t do much more than that. Then, she switched to Lucette in 2016 and has been on it ever since. “It worked like a dream,” she says.

Mahan’s skin didn’t clear up immediately — she says it took about six months for all of the acne to go away. She had scarring afterward, so she used the scar treatment Bio-Oil twice a day. Now, Mahan says, she’ll get little spots here and there, but overall her skin is clear.



Going on hormonal birth control can help clear up a woman's skin because it helps stabilize hormone levels, **Gary Goldenberg, MD**, assistant clinical professor of dermatology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Hospital, tells Yahoo Lifestyle. "When hormone levels are unstable, follicles are stimulated to produce more oil and inflammation, and this may result in acne bumps," he explains.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved four different forms of birth control to treat acne, Joshua Zeichner, MD, a New York City-based board-certified dermatologist, tells Yahoo Lifestyle: Yaz, Beyaz, Ortho Tri-Cyclen, and Estrostep. These pills are combined hormonal contraceptives, meaning they use a mixture of estrogen and progesterone, and they regulate what's going on in a woman's body so that there are no monthly hormonal fluctuations, Zeichner says. Lucette, the birth control that Mahan uses, is also a combined hormonal contraceptive.

While Bio-Oil worked for Mahan, it won't necessarily have the same effect on everyone. Bio-Oil has various ingredients that work to calm skin inflammation, but it doesn't directly treat acne, Zeichner says. It can also clog pores and make acne worse, Goldenberg says. He recommends talking to your dermatologist about procedures like laser resurfacing and microneedling, both of which can help with scarring.

If you're struggling with acne-prone skin and over-the-counter products aren't helping, Zeichner recommends visiting a dermatologist for evaluation and a treatment plan. "The longer you have acne, the more likely you are to develop a scar," he says. "Early effective treatment is important both to treat pimples you have, prevent new ones from popping out, and preventing the development of permanent scars."

Mahan says she's really happy with her skin now and just wanted to share her experience with it — and she's surprised by how many people have been interested in her story. "I didn't expect it to get so big, but I hope it can help people stay hopeful," she says.