

How to Get Rid of Stubborn Chest Acne for Good, According to Dermatologists

So you can finally whip out your favorite dress again!



By [Korin Miller](#) Feb 7, 2019



Acne is annoying no matter where it shows up on your body, but at least you expect it on some level on your face. When it suddenly shows up on your chest, it can be baffling. Why here? Why now?

At its core, “acne develops on the chest for the same reasons that it develops on the face or the back,” says Joshua Zeichner, MD, director of cosmetic and clinical research in dermatology at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City. That typically means your skin’s pores and hair follicles become clogged and inflamed, resulting in bumps, he says.

Like other forms of acne, chest acne doesn’t necessarily need a good reason to show up and ruin the way you look in your favorite dress. But, in general, a few things tend to increase your risk of breaking out. Here’s why chest acne pops up, how to get rid of it ASAP, and what you can do to lower your odds of dealing with it in the first place.

What causes chest acne, exactly?

Acne on your face is more likely to be influenced by hormonal changes than the acne on your chest, says [Gary Goldenberg, MD](#), assistant clinical professor of dermatology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City.

In addition to clogged pores, bacteria can get into your hair follicles and cause an infection that manifests as chest acne. “Sweating contributes to this process, as we see more body acne in those that are physically active and in the summer,” he says.

A type of yeast called pityrosporum can also play a role, says Cynthia Bailey, MD, a board-certified dermatologist in California and CEO of Dr. Cynthia Bailey Skin Care. Some amount of yeast naturally lives on your skin, she says, but when it’s given the perfect conditions—like warm, sweaty skin—it can thrive and cause bumps to appear.

“The pimples tend to be bright red and both itchy and tender at the same time,” she says. “The skin is often studded with tiny bumps that are really closed blocked pores.”

Hot weather, clothing that doesn’t breathe well, or a sudden increase in your workout routine can all contribute. Yeast also loves sugar, and eating a high-sugar diet increases the odds that your chest acne will take root and go haywire, Dr. Bailey says.

How to get rid of chest acne (and prevent it in the first place)

Making a few small tweaks to your daily routine can help banish chest acne. However, if none of the following tips help, call your dermatologist. You may need to try an antibiotic lotion or oral antibiotic to help clear things up.

Bust out the body wash

Showering regularly with an acne-fighting body wash is a good place to start. Look for products that contain benzoyl peroxide to fight bacteria, or salicylic acid to help unclog your pores, says Dr. Zeichner.

If you think your chest acne may be due to yeast, cleansing with a classic dandruff shampoo (yes, on your body!) may do the trick. The active ingredients in dandruff shampoo are designed to fight yeast on your scalp—so

naturally, it would have a similar effect on other parts of your body. Simply leave it on your chest for a few minutes and rinse thoroughly.

Applying a moisturizer that contains lactic acid can also be a helpful way to exfoliate dead skin cells while boosting hydration, says Dr. Bailey.

Try a spot treatment

If you have a particularly stubborn area of bumps, you can also apply an acne spot treatment that contains benzoyl peroxide, suggests Dr. Bailey. Just be mindful that benzoyl peroxide can bleach clothing, so plan accordingly.

Switch up your workout routine

What you wear when you sweat is crucial. “When you work out, make sure that you wear sweat-wicking fabric so that the clothing does not stick to your skin,” says Dr. Zeichner. He also recommends steering clear of cotton shirts *after* you work out, since they can stick to your skin and increase your risk of breakouts.

You’ll also want to change out of your sweaty clothes after you work out and wash up as soon as possible after you exercise, says Dr. Goldenberg. If you can’t get to a shower quickly, skin-cleansing wipes are better than nothing.

Ditch the sugar

Dr. Bailey recommends eating a diet rich in fresh fruits, vegetables, and organic whole foods. If chest or body acne is a known issue for you, “shun sugary, high-carb foods and dairy-rich food,” she says, adding that drinking water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages will also do your skin a favor.