

# Wait, So Those Pimples On My Butt Aren't Actually Pimples?

Women's Health by Celia Shatzman, Maddie Aberman, Women's Health • April 19, 2019



## From Women's Health

Talk about a (literal) pain in the you-know-what-but acne is anything but cute and can seriously get in the way of your summertime activities.

Even more annoying: “Buttne” isn’t the same as the pimples that pop up on your face, making this type of acne tough to treat, even if you’ve figured out how to deal with your normal breakouts.

“Butt acne is usually not true acne, but rather folliculitis, which is a mild infection of the hair follicle that leads to red bumps and pus pimples,” explains Joshua Zeichner, MD, director of cosmetic and clinical research in dermatology at Mount Sinai in New York City.

## But if it's not a regular pimple, what causes butt acne?

Buttne is usually caused by a combination of your hair follicles getting blocked and a bacterial infection. But most of the time, you can blame your booty bumps on blocked hair follicles, says [Gary Goldenberg, MD](#), assistant clinical professor of dermatology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Hospital. Here are a few reasons you might end up with clogged hair follicles—and they can range from the gross to the “wait, seriously?”

**1. Keeping your wet, sweaty clothes on after you've hit the gym:** Your sweat can dry over your pores and leave bumps in their wake. Change your clothes (and your underwear) and hop in the shower ASAP after you work out. If you don't have time for a full shower, do a quick cleanse with a body wipe, like Degree Deodorant Wipes (which are meant for full-body use, FYI).

**2. Sitting too much:** Those inflamed hair follicles, a.k.a. folliculitis, are caused by friction or irritation. So too much booty-to-chair time can make things worse. "If your job requires a lot of sitting, make an effort to stand up more frequently," says Mona Gohara, MD, dermatologist and a member of the *Women's Health* advisory board.

**3. Wearing undies past their prime:** Changing your underwear regularly is crucial, since old underwear puts acne-promoting dirt, sweat, and oil up close and personal with your skin. Make sure to put on a fresh pair every day.

**4. Wearing tight-fitting clothes:** Yup, your go-to skinny jeans and leggings can actually influence whether you get butt acne. Tight-fitting clothes not only causes friction against your skin, but it also traps sweat and oil against your backside and makes it more likely to block those hair follicles, leading to bumps on your butt.

## So you've got buttne-no biggie! Here are 7 ways to deal.

### **1. Hop in the shower right after exercising.**

"Showering immediately after a workout can help remove sweat, oil, and dirt that accumulate on the surface of the skin," says Dr. Zeichner.

### **2. Suds up with benzoyl peroxide.**

Try targeting your booty with a benzoyl peroxide body wash or cleanser. The ingredient is effective in treating both acne and folliculitis because of its antimicrobial (a.k.a. bacteria-fighting) properties. "Sing the full alphabet once you've applied the product so it can sit on the skin long enough to do its job, then rinse it off," advises Dr. Zeichner. (FYI: BP can bleach colored fabrics, so be sure to rinse thoroughly and use white towels!)

### **3. Unclog pores with salicylic acid.**

You can also combat your butt breakouts with a salicylic acid acne treatment. This form of beta hydroxy acid (BHA) can help remove excess oils and exfoliate dead skin cells so they don't get trapped in your pores and follicles (which is how buttne starts).

### **4. Brighten dark marks with glycolic acid.**

This is another buttne-fighting ingredient. "It has the benefit of brightening dark spots, which may develop after pimples or folliculitis go away," says Dr. Zeichner.

### **5. Moisturize that peach.**

You might assume using body lotion will clog your pores, but that's not the case if you use a lactic-acid option. "Lactic acid is an alpha hydroxy acid that helps hydrate the skin and exfoliate dead cells," Dr. Zeichner says. And when you get rid of dry skin cells, that helps prevent those bumps. (That's why it also works for preventing keratosis pilaris, a.k.a. chicken skin.)

**6. *Shave the right way.***

Yes, some people shave their butt. "If you shave, use at least a one- to two-blade razor and go with the grain of the hair instead of against it," says Dr. Gohara. "And use ample shaving cream as well as a lubricant."

**7. *Check in with a dermatologist.***

If at-home solutions aren't doing the trick, it might be time to make an appointment with a professional. "Your dermatologist may suggest a topical or oral antibiotic," says Dr. Gohara. "These can help decrease your skin's inflammation and clear the folliculitis up."