

BEAUTY & HEALTH



REAL SIMPLE PUTTING YOUR BEST FACE FORWARD IS OFTEN A MATTER OF COMMON SENSE: KEEP YOUR SKIN CLEAN, DON'T PICK AT IT, AND NEVER SMOKE.

all clear

Think skin care is confusing? Six pros spill easy, essential flawless-complexion secrets.

1 understand the problem

"Pimples during the teen years are primarily due to the huge surge in hormones during puberty," says New York City-based Marsha Gordon, M.D., a consulting dermatologist to St. Ives. "The hormones increase sebum production, making the cells that line your pores sticky—which in turn clogs them so that oil can't escape." When oil gets backed up, your pore develops a bump. If it's squeezed or becomes too full and the lining cracks, sebum and bacteria seep out into the skin and provoke inflammation. Chicago-based dermatologist Brooke Jackson, M.D., adds, "If you're involved in sports that require gear like helmets or pads, trapped sweat and dirt can trigger breakouts. It's important to wash your face as soon as possible after workouts."

2 don't be lazy

"Establishing a good routine in your teens may prevent problems in your 20s," Jackson says. "Your doctor can prescribe medications, and you may buy products to help, but they don't do any good if you don't use them regularly." The number one mistake girls make in taking care of their skin? "Falling asleep with makeup on!" Gordon answers. "Leaving your cosmetics on overnight can cause breakouts." It's also crucial to give your skin the occasional scrub or peel. "Exfoliation is essential to slough off dead skin cells," she notes. "But be gentle. Start mild and increase frequency once you know what your skin is able to handle."

3 keep products basic

"Skin needs to be able to breathe," says New York City celebrity facialist Tracie Martyn. "Stay away from anything too waxy or greasy when it comes to makeup or facial products." Look for moisturizers with salicylic acid—they hydrate as they unclog pores and gently exfoliate skin. And even if you have oily skin and are prone to breakouts, moisturizing is still a must. "It's a myth that drying out a zit will make it go away," Gordon says. "Overdrying may actually inflame a pimple and slow down recovery." >

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