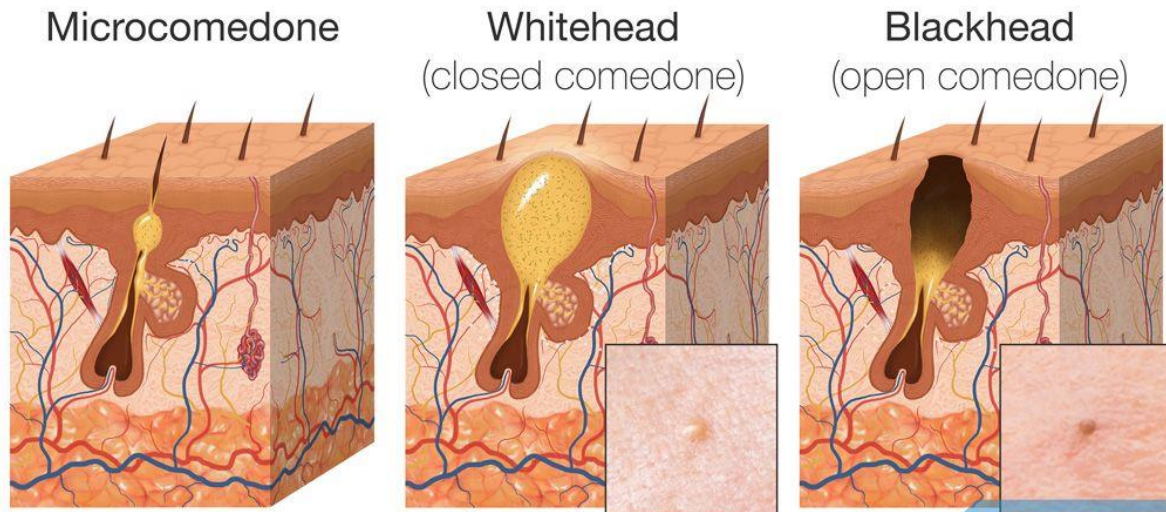




# COMEDONES EXPLAINED.

## Non-inflamed\* Acne

### Microcomedones and Comedones



\* All types of acne involve some inflammation

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Comedonal acne is a common type of acne that people often don't understand. It doesn't have the red, swollen pimples and pustules that acne vulgaris does (the most common form of acne). Comedonal acne, on the other hand, causes bumpy skin, blackheads, and spots that aren't red.

Comedonal acne happens when sebum (a waxy skin oil) and dead skin cells block a hair follicle. A comedo is made when dirt and oil block the hair follicle and sebaceous duct. We now know that inflammation is also a part of comedones.

One bump is called a comedo, and more than one bump is called a comedone.

## **The following things may lead to the formation of comedones:**

- The male sex hormone 5-testosterone (DHT) is working too much in skin cells.
- The sebum has less linoleate, which is the salt of the essential fatty acid linoleic acid. This makes the skin more scaly and decreases its ability to protect itself.
- Proinflammatory cytokines, which are cell signaling proteins like Interleukin 1 (IL-1) and IL-8, are made by the cells that line the follicle when the innate immune system is activated.
- Acne bacteria use sebum to make free fatty acids.
- When women get their periods, use moisturizers, or live in humid places, their skin gets too wet.
- Some chemicals, such as oily pomades, isopropyl myristate, propylene glycol, and some dyes used in cosmetics, can cause cancer.
- Rupture of the follicle, which can be caused by things like picking at pimples, washing too roughly, getting chemical peels, or laser treatments.
- Comedonal acne is more common in people who smoke than in people who don't smoke.
- Comedonal acne may be caused by what you eat, especially milk products and foods with a high glycemic index (sugars and fats)

**Comedonal acne looks different from normal acne. In fact, a lot of people who have comedonal acne don't think they have acne.**

This is because comedones are not red or swollen like most pimples. Most of the time, they don't get too big or have pus. Instead, they show up as smaller, non-inflamed bumps called papules that can be closed or open.

Comedones can sometimes turn into acne pimples if you pop them, which makes it easy for bacteria to get into the broken skin.

Most comedones happen on the forehead, the chin, and the jawline. They can also form on the face, neck, shoulders, back, chest, and shoulders.

The symptoms can be mild (with just a few spots) or very bad (covering large areas of skin). Comedones can happen on their own or in addition to acne.



## **TYPES OF COMEDONES.**

### **CLOSED COMEDONES.(whiteheads)**



Whiteheads are small bumps on the skin that can be anything from creamy white to flesh-colored. They happen when the oil plug forms far below where the hair follicle's opening, or pore, is. Most of the time, they show up on the forehead, the chin, and the cheeks.

There is no pain from a whitehead. They can't be "popped" because they don't have pus or an infection beneath them.

## OPEN COMEDONES.(black heads)



When the oil plug is close to the opening of a pore, this is called an open comedone or blackhead.

The dark color doesn't come from dirt, but from a chemical change in melanin, the pigment that gives skin its color. When dead skin cells are exposed to oxygen, the melanin in them oxidizes and turns dark brown. This is what makes a blackhead.

If you took out a blackhead, you'd see that the top of the plug is dark. But the lower part stays a color between creamy white and yellow.

Blackheads usually show up on the sides and bridge of the nose, as well as the chin, shoulders, and back.

## KEY FACTS.

Closed comedones, also known as whiteheads, form when an oil plug is deep inside a pore. Open comedones, also known as blackheads, happen when an oil plug is close to the opening of a pore.

## MICROCOMEDONES.

Microcomedones are the tiniest spots that can be caused by acne. These comedones, which you can't see with your eyes, are the "seeds" from which larger comedones grow. Comedones and pimples that are red and swollen start out as microcomedones.

**MACROCOMEDONES** are Giant Comedones are they are of two types-



Large comedones that are either closed or open are called macrocomedones. They can be between one and three millimeters (0.04 to 0.12 inches) in diameter. 5 Most of the time, a macrocomedo will be open because it is big enough to push through the pore.

**Giant comedones are blackheads** that are between a few millimeters and two centimeters (0.78 inches) in diameter.



They usually show up as a single blackhead and affect mostly older people.

## **SOLAR COMEDONES**



Solar comedones, which are also called "senile comedones," are caused by being in the sun too much for a long time. They can be big or small, open or shut. When the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays hit the skin for a long time, the skin can thicken and papules can form in pores that are swollen. This usually happens on the nose, cheeks, forehead, and around the eyes.

People over 60 are most likely to get solar comedones. But if you spend a lot of time in the sun, they can start to show up as early as your 40s.

## CAUSES

Comedones are part of the pilosebaceous unit, which is made up of a hair follicle and a sebaceous gland. The waxy oil that coats, moisturizes, and protects the skin is made by sebaceous glands.

On the face, neck, upper chest, shoulders, and back, there are a lot of pilosebaceous units. Keratin, a protein found in skin, nails, and hair, and sebum can block the opening of the follicle pore when there is too much of each.

## DANGER SIGNS

Comedonal acne is very common during the preteen and teen years, just like most other types of acne. but it can happen at almost any age, even when a person is an adult.

**Comedonal acne can sometimes be a sign of acne vulgaris to come,** especially when it happens during puberty. Even so, just because you have comedones doesn't mean you'll get pimples. Other things, like genetics, seem to play a role.

Most people in a family have comedonal acne. You are more likely to have it if your parents or siblings did.

The production of androgens (male hormones) goes up during puberty, which can make the sebaceous glands work too hard. The same thing can happen before a woman's period starts when hormone levels rise.

Things you put on your face or skin can sometimes cause comedonal acne or make it worse. This includes skin creams or hair pomades that are oily. High humidity and pollution in the air can also play a role.

## **HOW TO FIND AND TREAT ACNE**

Like other types of acne, comedones are not caused by not taking care of your skin. Scrubbing or washing your face more often won't help get rid of a breakout. Even though taking care of your skin every day is important, it can't cure or stop comedonal acne on its own.

But you can get help from both over-the-counter (OTC) and prescription medicines. One of these is:

- Salicylic acid
- Benzoyl peroxide
- Differin (adapalene)
- Topical retinoids
- Azelaic acid

If your acne isn't too bad, you might be able to treat it with a drug that you put on your skin. For more severe or persistent acne, see a dermatologist.

Whether you use an over-the-counter (OTC) product or one you get from a doctor, it could take up to 12 weeks before you start to feel better. Don't give up, even if nothing changes right away.

If you don't see changes in three to four months, talk to your doctor. They may suggest that you try stronger treatments.



## **HOW TO AVOID GETTING ACNE**

Changes in how you care for your skin can help you avoid or get rid of small comedone outbreaks. Here are some simple ways to keep pores from getting clogged:

### **Wash your face with oil free cleansing gel twice a day (Am/Pm)-**

Cleaning acne-prone skin too often can irritate the skin and make it dry and red. When your skin is inflamed, it is more likely to get sick, which makes acne pimples more likely.

**Use non -comedogenic skin products that don't cause acne.-**These are cleansers, moisturizers, and cosmetics that don't contain oil or ingredients that clogged your pores and are made to keep pores from getting clogged.

**Keep your brushes and tools for putting on makeup clean.-**On bristles and pads, oil and dead skin cells can build up. Most of the time, you can get rid of them with warm, soapy water. Rinse well and let dry in the air.

**Remove your makeup before bedtime-** When you sleep with makeup on, it can clog your pores. To avoid irritation, use a makeup remover that has no scent and no alcohol. Some have glycerin or aloe vera in them to help keep skin moist.

**Wash your face after doing something hard day job -** Don't let oil and sweat stick to your skin. Take a shower and then use a light, oil-free moisturizer to rehydrate your skin right away.

**Don't squeeze a blackhead or whitehead if you get one-**It is more likely that you will hurt your skin and make a spot. Small blackheads can be removed with the help of sticky pore strips and clay masks. Whiteheads should be left alone and treated on the surface of the skin.

## **SUMMARY**

Comedonal acne happens when an oily plug of sebum and dead skin cells gets stuck in your hair follicle. Closed comedones, also called whiteheads, form under the opening of your pores. Open comedones, also called blackheads, form near the opening of a pore.

Comedones happen most often when people are in their teens, but they can happen at any age. Changes in hormones could be one cause. Moisture and oily skin care products can also make it worse.

Your skincare consultant can help you figure out what's wrong and make sure the bumps aren't caused by something else. They might recommend a salicylic acid or benzoyl peroxide cream to put on the skin.

Comedones can also be avoided by using skin products that don't cause them, taking off your makeup at night, and washing your face twice a day.

## **WHY YOU SHOULDN'T POP YOUR ZITS/PIMPLES**

"Hands-off" is by far the best thing for the skin. The best thing you can do for your zit is to let it heal on its own. To put it another way, you shouldn't pop it or squeeze it.

- If you do squeeze a pimple, you may be able to drain some pus from it. The problem is that when you squeeze the pimple, it moves up and down. Not only are you moving pus, but you are also moving other things. At the center of the pimple is a plug made of dead skin cells and sebum, a natural oil. When you

squeeze a pimple, you push this plug deeper into the skin pore where the pimple is.

- The pressure of the popping may also cause the pore wall to break. This happens below the surface of the skin, where you can't see it. This means that the infection can spread in the dermis layer of the skin.
- Because of this, popping a pimple can hurt more than leaving it alone. The more damaged your skin is, the more likely it is that you will get acne scars.

### **KEY POINT.**

Let a pimple heal on its own if you can. Popping or squeezing a pimple won't just get rid of the pus you can see. It also forces it deeper into the skin. This makes the infected material spread and can hurt the skin even more.

### **PROFESSIONAL EXTRACTION.**

Visit a doctor who specializes in skin problems. The zit or blackhead can be drained by a dermatologist or esthetician.

They have been trained to know how to get rid of a spot without hurting the skin.

Extractions are great for getting rid of blackheads.

Most of the blackheads on your skin can be removed in just a few visits to a professional.

Of course, you can't just run to the dermatologist or salon every time a spot shows up. Both how much it costs and how long it takes make it hard to do.

## **EXTRACTION TECHNIQUES.**

Steps for Extractions.

- Use soap and water to clean your hands well.
- Small pieces of cotton wool with an antiseptic and disinfectant (e.g. hydrogen peroxide and methylated spirits) for cleaning the extracted area and the lancet and tile.
- Two gloves
- Place index fingers in the middle of the cotton wool, and fold over and use for extractions.
- Now stretch the skin and with the lancet open the lesion (comedones, pustules or milia) from the top and extract.
- Extraction method- Place index fingers wrapped in damp cotton wool squares on the outside and under blockage, press down and work in and upward doing slight wiggling motion with fingers thus gently coaxing blockage out.
- If having difficulty removing the blockage, use a lancet at 90 degree to the area/
- After extraction, wipe over the area of removal with antiseptic.

### **METHOD 2.**

With the tip of the needle, prick only the very top of the whitehead. Do this at a straight angle to the skin. Don't go so far that you cut your client, If this hurts your client you're either poking at it too hard or it's not ready to be treated yet.

- Cover your fingers with a piece of paper or cotton. Put one finger on each side of the spot.

Pull gently away from the pimples,. This is the opposite of what happens when you squeeze. It will often work to drain the pimple without pushing any infected material deeper into the skin.

If it works, stop here. You don't have to squeeze at all. Use soap or face wash to clean the area, and then put some toner or astringent on it.

If the whitehead is still there:

Get two pieces of cotton. Put light pressure on the edges of the pimples . This is better than using your fingers to squeeze.

Use the cotton swabs to clean around the spot. So, you won't always have to push from the same sides.

Don't squeeze too hard or draw blood. You just need enough pressure to get the whitehead to drain.

Wash with cleanser when you're done. Try using a toner or an astringent. You can also put a small amount of antibacterial cream on the pimple.

Recap

To safely pop a pimple, you need to know two main things. First, make sure the area is clean and safe. Then, only apply light pressure. Don't try too hard. If the pimple doesn't drain easily, it's not ready. Leave it alone for the night and try a spot treatment.

Don't pop a deep, red pimple.(Inflamed pimples)

You can sometimes pop a whitehead with your finger. But you should never try to pop certain kinds of pimples. Especially if you see:

- Any red pimples that doesn't have a white head

- Big, inflamed, deep blemishes. These could be nodules or cysts that shouldn't be popped. The core is too deep in the skin, so it's best to just let them heal on their own. A spot treatment or medicine for acne might help them get better.
- It might not be a pimple if the spot is big and hurts a lot. It could be a boil, though.

## **COMEDONE EXTRACTORS**

Blackheads can be taken off with small metal tools called comedone extractors. They could be a choice. But in the wrong hands, they can do more harm than good. It's easy to put too much pressure on your skin and get a bruise.

If you do use a comedone extractor, clean it with rubbing alcohol before you use it. Wrap the tool's loop around the blackhead, making sure the blackhead is in the middle. Put light, straight down pressure on the skin, and don't dig into it. If your skin gets red, you are pushing too hard.

### **KEY POINT.**

Some spots, like ones that are red or swollen, should be left alone. On the other hand, blackheads may be easier to get rid of. You can do it by hand, or you can use a comedone extractor if you know how to use it safely. They can be hard to get rid of. If you can't get them out, leave them alone until tomorrow.

Summary: Not popping a pimple is the safest way to do it. There are times, though, when you might want to. So the next best thing to do is use the right method so you don't hurt the skin or spread an infection.

How you treat a pimple will depend on what kind you have and what stage it is in. Whether you have a whitehead or a blackhead, the steps here will help you "pop" your pimple in a clean and safe way.