

spot removal

Here, dermatologists share tips on how to tackle every different type of acne.

BLACKHEADS AND WHITEHEADS

LOOKS LIKE: Just as the name suggests, blackheads look like tiny, dark dots. “The clog itself is made of follicle-lining cells that stick inside the pore. As they’re exposed to air, the cells oxidize and turn black,” says Pennsylvania-based dermatologist Richard G. Fried, M.D. Whiteheads form the same way, but because they aren’t exposed to air, they don’t turn black.

BEAT IT: “Over-the-counter salicylic acid or glycolic acid products dissolve dead skin that clogs pores,” says Daniela Kroshinsky, M.D., of Harvard Medical School. For tougher whiteheads, try a prescription retinoid like Retin-A Micro Pump. “It works by increasing the rate of skin-cell turnover,” says Hilary Baldwin, M.D., of the State University of New York in Brooklyn.

PAPULES AND PUSTULES

LOOKS LIKE: Papular inflammatory acne shows up as tender red or pink bumps, while the pustular variety is red and pus-filled.

BEAT IT: “Retinoids like Atralin prevent the formation of new pimples and can help diminish any pigmentation left behind,” Fried says. “But you may also need an antibiotic to take care of inflammation.”

CYSTIC AND NODULAR ACNE

LOOKS LIKE: The most severely scarring variety, cystic and nodular acne are rubbery, painful bumps that sit beneath the skin’s surface and never come to a head. “Cystic acne should *always* be treated by a doctor,” says Lisa Rhodes, M.D., a dermatologist in Austin, Texas.

BEAT IT: “Cystic acne should be treated with antibiotics along with a topical regimen of retinoids,” Rhodes says. “Hormone manipulation (such as birth control pills) can also be helpful, and in some severe cases, further prescriptions like isotretinoin (once sold as Accutane) are needed.” —LAUREL PANTIN

FOR MORE ACNE NEWS, SEE “SKIN DEEP,” ON PAGE TK.



acne essentials



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: CLINIQUE ACNE SOLUTIONS CONCEALER, \$14. DILLARD’S. CLEARASIL ULTRA PIMPLE BLOCKER PEN, \$10. TARGET. NEUTROGENA WAVE, \$13. CVS. CLEAN & CLEAR BLACKHEAD ERASER MASK, \$5. CVS. KORRES SHOWER GEL FOR ACNE, \$15. SEPHORA.

From top: DON ASHBY & OLIVIER CLAISSE/courtesy of Style.com; LUCAS VISSER (5).