Acne is a skin condition that occurs when oil glands overproduce oil, essentially clogging the pores. The oil that normally keeps the skin moisturized is instead trapped in the pores. This blockage often results in pimples, blackheads, whiteheads and even cysts. Pimples are skin swellings that can be filled with pus. Blackheads are dark bumps on the skin that result from oil and cells in blocked pores. Whiteheads are small white colored bumps. Cysts are closed sacs that contain fluid that lie under the skin. Chronic oil overproduction can result in acne, which can be in the form of any or all of the aforementioned skin irritations.

While the exact causes of acne are unknown, doctors hypothesize about several causes and treatments to cure acne in chronic acne sufferers. In addition to hormonal and hereditary factors, certain drugs like lithium and barbiturates are also known to cause acne. Greasy cosmetics may also clog pores, as well as sweat being trapped against skin in the case of helmet straps, hats, tight collars, backpacks and more. Also, environmental stressors like pollution and humidity can contribute to clogged pores and acne outbreaks.

In order to get rid of acne, you need to get rid of the bacteria that are clogging up the pores and keep your face clean without over-cleansing or irritating the skin. Many people have trouble finding the exact balance of products that will cure their acne. Acne outbreaks can be painful both physically and emotionally. Those who suffer from acne often seek the help of a dermatologist to cure acne. Topical ointments and creams as well as ingestible medications can be prescribed to help lessen acne outbreaks and scarring from acne. Antibiotics like Tetracycline are commonly prescribed to kill bacteria, reduce future bacterial growth and reduce inflammation. Physicians can also be consulted to evaluate hormone levels in women if acne continues to be persistent throughout adulthood.

One of the most common ways to unclog pores is to apply salicylic acid to acne blemishes. Salicylic acid loosens the oil and keratin that form the barrier that keeps the bacteria in the pore. You’ll also want to then kill the bacteria that is blogging the pores by using a gel, cream or soap that contains benzoyl peroxide. Benzoyl peroxide kills the bacteria that are associated with causing acne. Other effective treatments against acne bacteria are triclosen, chlorhexidine gluconate and clove oil.

Another tip to help you get rid of acne are to resist picking and touching your breakouts. Touching your face only deposits more bacteria that can clog pores, and irritates blemishes that may already exist. Also only wash your face twice a day. Over-washing leads to even more dead skin cells that will clog your pores. For women, make-up should be “oil free” or “noncomedogenic” to ensure that you are not clogging your pores. Also, when using hair sprays or gels, keep them away from the hairline, as these products can also clog pores and cause acne flare-ups.

Alternative treatments for acne include microdermabrasion, laser treatments, and heat treatments. Women taking birth control pills have also experienced less acne because of the fluctuation in hormones and lowered oil gland production. Most acne treatments take a few weeks before fully working, so be patient with treatments and keep using them even when you
don’t see immediate results. Acne treatments may also cause drying or scaling of the skin, increased sensitivity to the sun, rashes or irritation. Be sure to research side effects and contact a doctor if you experience any negative reactions to acne treatment products.