

**Louisiana Pharmacists Association**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Louisiana Pharmacists Association Educates Patients about Acne**

Acne is the most common skin disorder in the United States. Though acne is commonly seen in adolescents, some adults may also be affected. Acne has been shown to lower self-esteem, reduce employability, and to have a negative impact on everyday quality of life.

Recognizing and avoiding exacerabating factors may help patients to improve their condition. Irritation from tight or occlusive clothing may cause friction thereby worsening acne. Additionally, greasy or oily cosmetics that come in direct contact with skin may provoke acne. Certain medications, including corticosteroids, androgens, and lithium can also aggravate acne. Stress, family history, humid environments, and sweating are all additional risk factors.

If acne is suspected, a dermatologist should first be consulted for diagnosis. Other skin conditions can present similarly to acne. If acne is confirmed, the dermatologist will then grade its severity on a scale from I to IV. Grade I acne is mildest, while grade IV is most severe. The grade of acne is very important because it ultimately dictates treatment options. Patients with grade I acne generally present with whiteheads and/or blackheads. This form of acne is non-inflammatory and is self-treatable with over-the-counter medications. If left untreated, grade I acne may progress to grade II. Patients with acne grades II-IV will generally present with more papules and pustules. This type of acne is inflammatory and is not

recommended for self-treatment. Patients with inflammatory acne should avoid over-the-counter therapy and instead consult with their dermatologist.

Before initiating drug therapy, patients should first take nonpharmacologic measures to improve their condition. Cleansing the skin with a mild soap or non-soap cleanser twice daily and avoiding excessive cleansing are recommended. Hydration is also extremely important in order to reduce inflammatory chemicals in the body. If acne persists and remains non-inflammatory, self-treatment may be appropriate. Benzoyl peroxide is one of the most common OTC treatments for acne. Benzoyl peroxide works by unclogging pores and reducing inflammation and non-inflammatory lesions. Products containing benzoyl peroxide include Proactiv, Clean & Clear, and ZAPZYT. Salicylic acid is another OTC treatment option available. It works by reducing pore blockages thereby preventing new breakouts. Salicylic acid is found in cleansers, lotions, and treatment pads. Salicylic acid offers additional protective properties by inhibiting ultraviolet radiation B (UVB). Sulfur and resorcinol may also be considered as additional treatment options.

Acne is not curable, only managed through appropriate treatment. Several weeks of treatment may be required before visible improvement occurs. If a patient is unsure how to treat their acne, a pharmacist can be consulted to help choose the appropriate OTC product. For best results, patients should also employ nonpharmacologic strategies, including cleansing and hydration. Pharmacists can also provide information on prescription drugs that may provoke or improve acne conditions.

Resources:

<http://www.aad.org/dermatology-a-to-z/diseases-and-treatments/a--d/acne>

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/acne/basics/definition/con-20020580>

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**The Louisiana Pharmacists Association, established in 1882, strives to promote the interests of all pharmacists of the State of Louisiana. For more information about the LPA and its benefits, contact Julie Fuselier or Phyllis Perron, LPA Co-Executive Directors at 225/346-6883 or visit our website at [www.louisianapharmacists.com](http://www.louisianapharmacists.com).**

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