

# 5 ways to help your teenager survive acne



Having any type of acne (pimples, whiteheads, blackheads, or acne cysts) can feel devastating for a teenager.

Just when our appearance becomes so important and we want to look our best, acne can begin. Some teens seem unfazed by acne. For most teenagers, however, this especially visible skin problem can be upsetting.

If your teenager seems upset by acne, here's how you can help:

1. **Take acne seriously.** Telling your teen that the pimples, blackheads, and other blemishes will eventually clear on their own may do more harm than good. While waiting for acne to clear on its own, your teen's self-esteem could plummet. Many studies show that having acne tends to lower self-esteem.

Kids who have acne can also be bullied. Classmates may call them names like "pizza face" or "crater face." They may tell them to wash their face. Bullying can also lower self-esteem.

Studies show that self-esteem rises when acne clears. Treatment can help clear acne.

Treating acne now can also prevent acne from worsening. Without treatment, acne sometimes becomes severe. When severe acne clears, it can leave permanent acne scars.

2. **Be cautious about reminding your teen to use acne treatment.** For treatment to work, your teen must use it. To help, you may want to remind your teen to use the acne treatment. Do this cautiously.

In a small study, dermatologists found that when parents reminded their teens every day to use their acne medicine, the approach backfired. The teens said the daily reminders felt like “nagging.” This caused the teens to use their acne treatment less often.

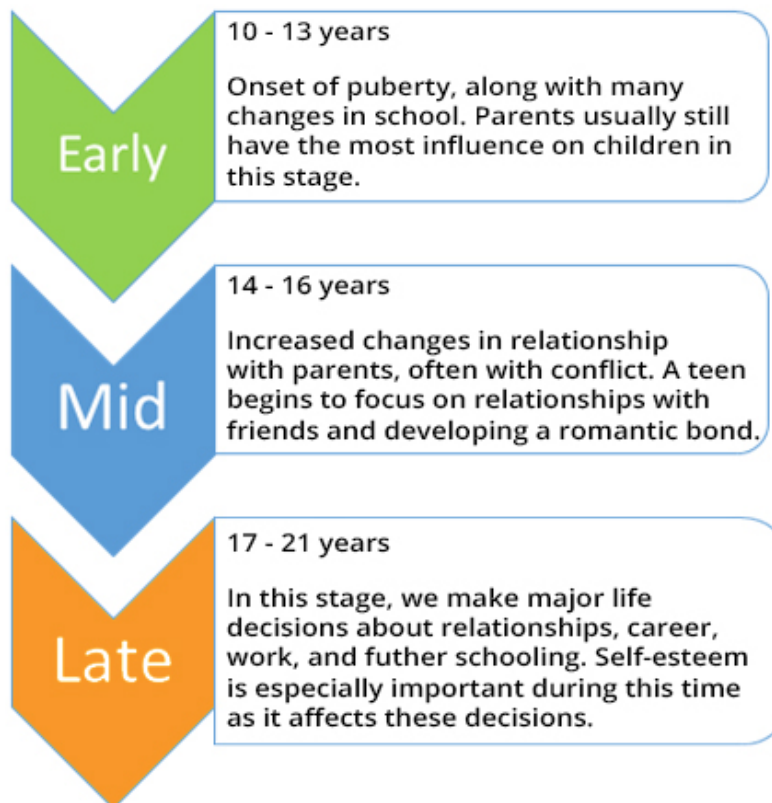
Fewer reminders from parents may be more effective.

What may help is to keep all of your teen’s dermatology appointments. Studies show that most people, including teenagers, are more likely to follow a treatment plan right before — and after — an appointment.

3. **Try to reduce stress.** During the teenage years, just about everything can seem stressful. That said, anything you can do to reduce stressful situations can help. Stress can cause acne to flare.

### Stages of adolescence

Adolescence is a complex time in one’s life, characterized by many changes. The following can help you understand what your child is going through.



4. **Watch for signs of depression.** Having acne can affect how teens — and even adults — feel about themselves. Many studies have shown that having acne can lead to depression, anxiety, or both. The longer one has acne, the more likely these problems are to occur.

Studies have also found that clearing acne can relieve depression and anxiety.

Because depression can have such a devastating effect on one's life, it's important for parents to recognize the signs, which may include:

- Sadness that lasts for 2 weeks or longer
- Loss of interest in activities that your teen once enjoyed
- Tendency to avoid social activities, even with people their own age

If you notice any of these behaviors while your teen has acne, it may be time to see a dermatologist for acne treatment. Thanks to advances in treatment, virtually every case of acne can be successfully treated.

5. **Let your teen meet with the dermatologist alone.** If your teen sees a dermatologist, giving your teen time alone with the dermatologist can help everyone. It allows the dermatologist to find out what your teen wants and create a bond. This can be a lot harder to do when a parent is in the exam room.

Most teenagers get acne. If the acne upsets them, having someone who can help them see clearer skin is sure to be appreciated.

Treating acne when it begins may prevent low self-esteem, depression, and anxiety.



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**Images:** Getty Images

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