

# does stress cause acne?

Learn how to limit chronic stress for the sake of your skin.

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## story highlights

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- Stress doesn't always cause acne, but research shows a significant link between the two.
  - Chronic, continual stress triggers activities in the body that can lead to breakouts or make existing breakouts worse.
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Chronic, continual stress is a top trigger for the factors that contribute to acne development. Research has shown that acne is significantly associated with internal stress levels, and that chronic stress can make existing breakouts worse. How?

Chronic stress increases levels of stress-related hormones such as cortisol and sends skin's sebaceous (oil) glands into overdrive, which mixes with dead skin cells and breakout-causing bacteria. Adult skin is more prone to buildup of dead skin cells because natural cell turnover slows over time.

When skin is stressed, it also loses some of its ability to protect itself because its barrier becomes compromised. For adults, this can lead to further complications, such as inflammation and premature signs of skin aging. Stress damages collagen, causing wrinkles. Cortisol lowers natural production of Hyaluronic Acid, which dehydrates skin and increases the appearance of fine lines. Dehydration also triggers even more production of excess sebum, which creates the perfect breeding ground for breakout-causing bacteria.

In today's busy world, the increased pressure to do more faster makes it hard to limit chronic stress. But adults who are prone to acne can benefit from doing so. Yoga, deep breathing, exercise, sleep, aromatherapy... even a quick walk with a friend or co-worker during the day can help manage chronic stress. Cutting back on caffeine and sugar can also help manage breakouts, as can establishing a daily and nightly skin care regimen that treats both adult acne and premature signs of aging.