

Little evidence either way for diet, sun and cleansing for acne

Clinical question Do diet, facial cleansing and sun exposure have any effect on acne vulgaris?

Bottom line Although the literature on the subject is of poor quality, the benefits of facial cleansing and sun exposure should not be summarily dismissed by clinicians.

Synopsis Patients often believe that fatty foods, lack of sun exposure, poor hygiene and inadequate face cleansing all worsen acne. Although the importance of these factors is often derided by clinicians, the actual evidence is unclear. In this systematic review, the authors searched the literature for every study of the above factors for acne vulgaris. Three small and poorly designed studies found that eating chocolate has no effect.

Studies of facial cleansing and increased UV-ray exposure reveal mixed results, but some randomised trials have shown an objective benefit of these interventions. Well-designed studies with adequate numbers of patients are needed.

Level of evidence 1a– (systematic review of randomised controlled trials with troublesome heterogeneity)

Reference Magin P, Pond D, Smith W, Watson A. A systematic review of the evidence for 'myths and misconceptions' in acne management: diet, face-washing and sunlight. *Family Practice* 2005;22:62-70.

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