

By: Lori Murdock

## ACNE & ANTIBIOTICS

- Q. I am interested in a natural supplement for acne. I have been taking antibiotics for 6 years. This worked well for me in the past but recently seems to have lost its effectiveness. I also have noticed occasional problems with yeast infections. Is there a connection between the yeast, the acne, and/or antibiotics?
- A. As you may have heard in the news, the overuse of antibiotics can have some serious side effects. One problem associated with the overuse of antibiotics is the creation of bacteria that are resistant to that particular antibiotic. Resistance means the antibiotic may not be as effective in future use. This is one reason I do not condone the use of antibiotics for acne, colds (viral infections), or as a preventative.

The most common antibiotics for acne are tetracycline-type antibiotics, which have broad-spectrum activity. This means that it kills many types of bacteria. The problem here is that it also kills good bacteria the body needs to function properly.

Your body naturally hosts bacteria that cover your skin and gastrointestinal tract. This bacteria has many purposes. In your intestines, it aids digestion, produces vitamins, and protects you from the overgrowth of unwanted bacteria or yeast. When you take an antibiotic, you alter this normal balance of bacteria.

Natural medicine practitioners acknowledge a relationship between the digestive system and the skin. Both areas are epithelial tissue and react similarly to irritation and inflammation. What happens in the gastrointestinal tract is sometimes reflected in the skin (especially the face). This connection is easy to see when we consider how easily a teen's acne will flare up from a poor diet.

The most effective way to deal with acne is to clean up your diet (eliminate or decrease the consumption of refined sugar) and take a "probiotic" supplement. A probiotic contains good bacteria, such as acidophilus. There are other beneficial bacteria as well. I recommend products that have a combination of various beneficial bacteria to assure that your body achieves the balance it requires. It is also important to purchase a product that has been refrigerated for freshness. I also recommend a probiotic supplement for 7 to 14 days following the use of any antibiotic product.

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