



## ACNE AGGRAVATED

Acne is a common affliction of the sebaceous glands, afflicting nearly everyone, at one time or another. The sebaceous gland disorder concerns the overproduction of sebum, more so than be excreted by the glands to the surface of the skin. Zits or pimples then ensue.

Mistakes in treatment that can aggravate the condition include:

- Lotions – applying occlusive agents, such as moisturizers or Vaseline, only occlude the sebaceous gland opening more. This results in additional acne lesions. The skin is not dry; rather, this is scale that needs to be removed. This results in matting down the debris and covering the sebaceous gland openings, even more. (Figure 1)
- Picking – This may eliminate a pimple, temporarily, but the downside is the fact that a permanent scar may result. (Figure 2)
- Scrubbing – The skin is irritated enough. At one time, it was thought that scrubbing the skin would eliminate debris, and the sebum could pour out. Not only were wash clothes suggested, but also scrubs with aluminum granules were recommended. Unfortunately, this type of irritation only caused more acne pimples.
- Sun exposure – While sun or ultraviolet light treatment can cause some peeling of the skin, continued use often creates irritation to the sebaceous gland openings and more acne. This explains why acne may seem better in the summer, only to flare in the fall, when there is less sun to peel the skin.



Figure 1: Acne cosmetica – acne flared by applying lotion.



Figure 2: Acne ecoriée de jeune fille – lesions that have been picked and not necessarily limited to young women.

Lawrence Charles Parish, MD, MD (Hon)  
Philadelphia, PA, USA