

ACNE: Treatment choices for patients over 12 years. Refer to CKS for pathway details and BNF or SPC for prescribing details

Mild acne – self care	<i>Treatments are effective but take time to work (usually up to 8 weeks) and may irritate the skin, especially at the start of treatment</i>			Clinical Presentations Comedonal: 1 st choice topical retinoid 2 nd choice azelaic acid Papular/pustular: 1 st choice benzoyl peroxide + retinoid 2 nd choice benzoyl peroxide + antibiotic Pregnancy Avoid retinoids and tetracyclines Benzoyl peroxide and erythromycin usually safe Refer with urgency depending on the clinical situation <ul style="list-style-type: none">Severe variant such as conglobate/fulminansVisible scarring or risk of scarringSignificant increased pigmentationMultiple treatment failuresPsychological distressDiagnostic uncertainty Oral isotretinoin has been classified as RED and should be prescribed by hospital only
Advise to consult with community pharmacy for access to over the counter treatments	Benzoyl peroxide – topical preparations available			
Mild to moderate acne – topical treatment	<i>Review response at 8-12 weeks. Continue treatment if improvement, if clear (or almost clear) maintain with topical retinoid or azelaic acid. If no response, check adherence</i>			
Retinoid +/- benzoyl peroxide	Adapalene	Differin [®] 0.1% cream/gel	£16.43 x45g	
	Benzoyl peroxide	Acnecide [®] 5% gel/wash	£5.44 x30g gel/50g wash	
	Adapalene + benzoyl peroxide	Epiduo [®] gel	£19.53 x 45g	
Antibiotic should always be prescribed in combination with benzoyl peroxide to prevent development of bacterial resistance	Clindamycin (preferred choice)	1% gel	£8.60 x 30g	
		1% lotion/solution	£5.08/£4.34 x 30ml	
		2% cream	£10.86 x 40g	
Antibiotic + benzoyl peroxide	<i>Erythromycin-zinc complex</i>	<i>Zineryt[®] lotion</i>	<i>£9.25/£20.02 x30/90ml</i>	
	Clindamycin + benzoyl peroxide	Duac [®] 30mg/g or 50mg/g gel	£13.14 x 30g	
Antibiotic + retinoid	Clindamycin + tretinoin	Treclin [®] gel	£11.94 x 30g	
	Erythromycin + isotretinoin	Isotrexin [®] gel	£7.47 x 30g	
	Erythromycin + tretinoin	Aknemycin [®] Plus solution	£7.05 x 25ml	
Azelaic acid	Azelaic acid	Skinoren [®] 20% cream	£4.49 x 30g	
Moderate acne not responding to topical treatment – oral treatment added in	<i>Oral antibiotics should be used for a maximum of 3 months Switch antibiotic after 3 months if no improvement, adverse events or acne worsens. Refer if person is starting to scar.</i>			
Antibiotic (+ benzoyl peroxide/ topical retinoid)	Doxycycline; or	100mg od	£3.10 x 28 days	
	Oxytetracycline; or	500mg bd	£3.80 x 28 days	
	Lymecycline; or	408mg od	£4.56 x 28 days	
	Tetracycline	500mg bd	£7.40 x 28 days	
	<i>Macrolide only if tetracyclines contraindicated</i>	<i>Erythromycin 500mg bd</i>	<i>£6.46 x 28 days</i>	
	<i>[Minocycline - BLACK for acne due to safety concerns DO NOT PRESCRIBE]</i>			
In women - Combined oral contraceptives (+ benzoyl peroxide/ topical retinoid)	2 nd or 3 rd generation COC: cyproterone and ethinylestradiol (co-cyprindiol) is the only licensed COC for treatment of moderate to severe acne (related to androgen-sensitivity)		£5.70 x 3 months	
REFERENCES: NICE CKS last revised April 2018 NICE summary of antimicrobial prescribing guidance – managing common infection (February 2019) Primary Care Dermatology Society Primary Care Treatment Pathway for Acne (November 2015) Costs as per BNF updated 7 th August 2019 and Drug Tariff August 2019				