

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/fulminans • Visible scarring or risk of scarring • Significant increased pigmentation • Multiple treatment failures • Psychological distress • Diagnostic uncertainty
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	
	<i>Erythromycin-zinc complex</i>	<i>Zineryt[®] lotion</i>	<i>£9.25/£20.02 x30/90ml</i>	
Antibiotic + benzoyl peroxide	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</i>		<i>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				