



PureWow

How to Get Rid of Blackheads, According to a Dermatologist

By ALEXIA DELLNER | MAY 23, 2019

Ugh, blackheads. It's one of the most common forms of acne and also one of the most annoying (in our opinion). And while you've tried many different products to banish those pesky black spots (that especially love to show up on your nose), somehow they just keep coming back. That's why we tapped board-certified dermatologist and celebrity beauty expert [Dr. Anna Guanche](#) for her top tips for how to get rid of blackheads once and for all.



Know what you're dealing with

"Blackheads are clogged pores or hair follicles where the keratin plug is exposed to the outside air and gets oxidized, turning it 'black,'" Dr. Guanche tells us. (FYI, these are called "open comedones.") Whiteheads are also clogged pores or hair follicles, but these are blocked rather than exposed to the air, which explains their color and raised appearance.

Be persistent

Dr. Guanche tells us that while it's totally possible to purge the skin and get rid of both blackheads and whiteheads, know that the keratin plugs may form again if you don't follow a consistent regimen. Translation? The blackheads leave but the pores are still left behind and can become clogged again.

Exfoliate regularly

"Exfoliating will help to slough off dead skin, which can get trapped in the mix with oil, sebum, and keratin, adding to clogged pores," says Dr. Guanche. She recommends non-inflammatory exfoliating products like glycolic acid and lactic acid. Try Pixi Skintreats Glow Tonic that's made with 5 percent glycolic acid—it's strong enough to work without being irritating.



Try retinoids

Dr. Guanche frequently recommends retinoids for patients that have blackheads and whiteheads. “Retin-A (also known as retinoic acid or tretinoin) is great for increasing cell turnover, removing dead skin, reducing oil production, and shrinking and refining pores.” Talk to your dermatologist about finding the right retinoid for you.

Avoid skin-clogging products

Anyone suffering from blackheads should avoid heavy face creams and moisturizers. Instead, opt for a light lotion, advises Dr. Guanche. “I would avoid some face oils if they are proven to be non-comedogenic (i.e., non-pore-clogging),” she adds. When it comes to makeup, stick to non-comedogenic options there, too. A light tinted moisturizer may be better than a heavy matte foundation, for example.

Book an extraction facial

Squeezing blackheads at home is a big no-no since it can lead to marks or scarring. But according to Dr. Guanche, heading to a skin-care specialist can be beneficial. “It’s best that they are associated with a skin care provider so that they may prescribe a regimen that targets blackheads and whiteheads or comedonal acne.”





Try a face mask

Treat yourself to a little self-care tonight by putting on an exfoliating mask or charcoal mask that “pulls out” blackheads. Doctor’s orders.

Or a chemical peel

“Chemical peels can help remove the dead top layers of dull skin,” Dr. Guanche explains. “Some chemical peels can also help unroof the clogged pore so that the blackheads can be removed more easily.”

Be diligent about hygiene

That means keeping makeup brushes clean, not touching your face and making regular facial appointments. And remember: always wash your makeup off before going to bed.

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