

Acne really is a nightmare for some teens

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Zits, pimples, bumps and blemishes are a young person's worst nightmare. Collectively they are known as acne, a very common skin condition that affects millions of adolescents. Now a Norwegian study published in the open access journal *BMC Public Health* has investigated the links between acne, diet and mental health issues in both males and females.

University of Oslo researcher Jon Anders Halvorsen together with co-authors from Lhasa (Tibet) and Boston (US) studied 3775 adolescents to explore the possible causes of acne. The 18- and 19-year olds were given questionnaires to monitor their diets, lifestyle variables, and mental conditions. Participants reported on their own acne. Lastly, researchers acquired the socio-demographic status of the young people from Statistics Norway.

The study identified crude associations between acne and high intake of chocolate and chips and low intake of vegetables. In girls, there was a significant link between acne and diet low in raw and fresh vegetables. This may indicate that a low-glycemic index could have a protective role in the development of acne.

Dr. Halvorsen said: "Our study shows a possible link between diet and acne. However, when we introduced symptoms of [depression](#) and [anxiety](#) in our statistical model, the role of diet became less clear. On the other hand the association between acne and mental health problems was still strong when diet was introduced. This underscores [mental health](#) problems as an important aspect of young people's acne".

He concluded, "It is too early to give evidence based diet advice to teenagers with acne. Further studies are needed. Luckily, acne is rarely associated with serious morbidity. However, it does cause problems for a high number of young people. I hope that this study will encourage doctors to help adolescents to treat their acne and researchers to find preventive factors. Young people deserve better!"

More information: Is the association between acne and mental distress influenced by diet? Results from a cross-sectional population study among 3775 late adolescents in Oslo, Norway. Jon A Halvorsen, Florence Dalgard, Magne Thoresen, Espen Bjertness and Lars Lien; [BMC Public Health](#) (in press); www.biomedcentral.com/bmcpublichealth/

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