

# Research testing topical antibiotic for acne

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As Easter looms, University of Melbourne researchers have good news on two fronts: eating chocolate does not cause pimples; and they're calling for participants for a trial of a new treatment for moderate or severe acne.

Dermatologist Rod Sinclair said chocolate lovers can feel free to indulge in their drug of choice in the knowledge that it does not cause [acne](#).

"The cause of acne is not chocolate, but a bacterium called p. acne that normally lives in the oil glands on the face, back and chest", Professor Sinclair said.

"When conditions are right, the bacteria multiply and produce inflammation in the form of pimples."

Professor Sinclair is recruiting adults and children for a trial of an antibacterial peptide, omiganan pentahydrochloride, applied as a cream to the skin.

Omiganan kills acne causing bacteria by disrupting the bacterial cell membranes. It also is anti-inflammatory, specifically reducing [bacteria](#) induced inflammation.

About 6,400 patients and healthy volunteers have been so far been enrolled into ongoing and completed studies, in which about 3,850 subjects have received omiganan.

Omiganan is not currently authorised for sale in any country.

Untreated acne can cause lifelong scarring and in severe cases, depression

Current treatments, such as roaccutane, are effective, but must be taken over a period of months, and can have serious side effects, such as depression, birth defects and fatigue. They can only be prescribed in Australia by specialist dermatologists.

"We believe omiganan may prove to be just as effective but gentler, and this trial is to establish its safety on humans," Professor Sinclair said.

Trial participants are provided with the treatment free of charge.

Provided by University of Melbourne

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