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Due to regulatory changes, the content of the following Patient Information Leaflet may vary from the one found in your medicine pack. Please compare the 'Leaflet prepared/revised date' towards the end of the leaflet to establish if there have been any changes.

If you have any doubts or queries about your medication, please contact your doctor or pharmacist.



Package leaflet: Information for the user



Dianette[®]

cyproterone acetate / ethinylestradiol

Bayer Schering Pharma

Read all of this leaflet carefully before you start taking this medicine.

- Keep this leaflet. You may need to read it again.
- If you have any questions or need more advice, ask your doctor, family planning nurse or pharmacist.
- This medicine has been prescribed for you. Do not pass it on to others. It may harm them.
- **If any of the side effects gets severe**, or if you notice any not listed in this leaflet, please tell your doctor, family planning nurse or pharmacist.

Your doctor has chosen this medicine as a suitable treatment for your skin. This leaflet explains how it works.

It is important for you to note that Dianette contains an oestrogen and progestogen – like an ordinary combined oral contraceptive – and will therefore provide effective contraception for the time you are using it. In recommending this medicine for you, your doctor will therefore have to consider all the things that would normally apply to the safe use of an ordinary oral contraceptive. Although you should not be using

Dianette solely for contraception, while you are using this medication you do not need to take any other oral contraceptive pill. Once your skin condition has cleared up and you stop taking Dianette, you will need to go back to your original/preferred method of contraception. However, should your skin condition return, your doctor may recommend that you start taking Dianette again.

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1. What Dianette does

Dianette is a combination of an oestrogen and an anti-androgen.

Your body makes both male and female sex hormones. Male hormones (androgens) stimulate the grease-glands in your skin and hairs that grow from it. If you produce too much androgen, or if you are particularly sensitive to their effects, the grease-glands may produce too much sebum. This can block the grease-glands, which can become infected and inflamed causing acne spots.

The main action of a special hormone in this medicine (cyproterone acetate) stops androgens affecting the skin. Your medicine also reduces the amount of hormones, including androgens, which are produced.

Uses in women only:

- a) severe acne which hasn't improved after the long-term use of oral antibiotics
- b) excessive hair growth on the face and body (moderately severe hirsutism)

As with ordinary oral contraceptives, Dianette is capable of preventing you from getting pregnant.

This medicine will stop you getting pregnant by working in three ways: by preventing an egg being released from your ovaries; by making the fluid (mucus) in your cervix thicker, which makes it more difficult for sperm to enter the womb; and by preventing the lining of your womb thickening enough for an egg to grow in it.

Dianette is a 21-day pill – you take one each day for 21 days, followed by 7 days when you take no pills.

The benefits of taking an oral contraceptive include:

- it is one of the most reliable reversible methods of contraception if used correctly
- it doesn't interrupt sex
- it usually makes your periods regular, lighter and less painful
- it may help with pre-menstrual symptoms.

You do not have to take any other oral contraceptive while you are taking Dianette.

Dianette will not protect you against sexually transmitted infections, such as Chlamydia or HIV. Only condoms can help to do this.

Dianette needs to be taken as directed to prevent pregnancy.

2. Make sure Dianette is OK for you

It's important that you understand the benefits and risks of taking Dianette before you start taking it, or when deciding whether to carry on taking it. Although Dianette is suitable for most healthy women it isn't suitable for everyone.

→ **Tell your doctor** if you have any of the illnesses or risk factors mentioned in this leaflet.

Before you start taking Dianette

- Your doctor will ask about you and your family's medical problems and check your blood pressure. You may also need other checks, such as a breast examination.

While you're on Dianette

- You will need **regular check-ups** with your doctor or family planning nurse, usually when you need another prescription of Dianette.
- You should go for **regular cervical smear** tests.
- **Check your breasts** and nipples every month for changes – tell your doctor if you can see or feel anything odd, such as lumps or dimpling of the skin.
- **If you need a blood test** tell your doctor that you are taking Dianette, because this type of medicine can affect the results of some tests.
- **If you're going to have an operation**, make sure your doctor knows about it. You may need to stop taking Dianette about 4–6 weeks before the operation. This is to reduce the risk of a blood clot (see section 2.1). Your doctor will tell you when you can start taking Dianette again.

2.1 Dianette and blood clots

Taking Dianette may slightly increase your risk of having a blood clot (called a *thrombosis*), especially in the first year of taking it.

A clot in a leg vein – a *deep vein thrombosis* (or DVT) – is not always serious. However, if it moves up the veins and blocks an artery in the lungs, it can cause chest pain, breathlessness, collapse or even death. This is called a *pulmonary embolism* and is very rare.

Your chances of having a blood clot are only increased slightly by taking Dianette.

- Of 100,000 women who are **not taking Dianette, not on the Pill** and not pregnant, about **5-10** will have a blood clot in a year.
- Of 100,000 women **take Dianette or the Pill**, up to **40** will have a blood clot in a year.
- Of 100,000 women who are **pregnant**, around **60** will have a blood clot in a year.

Very rarely, blood clots can also form in the blood vessels of the heart (causing a **heart attack**) or the brain (causing a **stroke**). In healthy young women the chance of having a heart attack or stroke is extremely small.

You are more at risk of having a blood clot:

- as you get **older**
- if you **smoke**
- if you or any of your close family have had **blood clots**
- if you are seriously **overweight**
- if you get **migraines**
- if you have **cardiovascular disease** (diseases of the heart or blood vessels)
- if you have **high blood pressure**

- if you have **diabetes**
- if you're **off your feet for a long time** because of major surgery, injury or illness.

→ **Tell your doctor if any of these apply to you.** Taking Dianette may add to this risk so may not be suitable for you.

Signs of a blood clot include:

- a **migraine** for the first time, a migraine that is worse than normal or unusually frequent or severe **headaches**
- any sudden **changes to your eyesight** (such as loss of vision or blurred vision)
- any sudden **changes to your hearing, speech, sense of smell, taste or touch**
- **pain or swelling in your leg**
- **stabbing pain when you breathe**
- **coughing** for no apparent reason
- **pain and tightness in the chest**
- sudden **weakness** or **numbness** in one side or part of your body
- **dizziness** or **fainting**.

→ **See a doctor as soon as possible. Do not take any more Dianette** until your doctor says you can. Use another method of contraception, such as condoms, in the meantime.

2.2 Dianette and cancer

Dianette reduces your risk of cancer of the ovary and womb if used in the long term. However, it also seems to slightly increase your risk of **cancer of the cervix** – although this may be due to having sex without a condom, rather than Dianette. All women should have regular **smear tests**.

If you have **breast cancer**, or have had it in the past, you should not take Dianette or other oral contraceptives, as they slightly increase your risk of breast cancer. This risk goes up the longer you're on Dianette, but returns to normal within about 10 years of stopping it. Because breast cancer is rare in women under the age of 40, the extra cases of breast cancer in current and recent Dianette users is small. For example:

- Of 10,000 women who have **never taken Dianette or the Pill**, about **16** will have breast cancer by the time they are 35 years old.
- Of 10,000 women who **take Dianette or the Pill for 5 years in their early twenties**, about **17–18** will have breast cancer by the time they are 35 years old.
- Of 10,000 women who have **never taken Dianette or the Pill**, about **100** will have breast cancer by the time they are 45 years old.
- Of 10,000 women who **take Dianette or the Pill for 5 years in their early thirties**, about **110** will have breast cancer by the time they are 45 years old.

Your risk of breast cancer is higher:

- if you have a close relative (mother, sister or grandmother) who has had breast cancer
- if you are seriously overweight

→ **See a doctor as soon as possible if you notice any changes in your breasts**, such as dimpling of the skin, changes in the nipple or any lumps you can see or feel.

Taking Dianette has also been linked to liver diseases, such as jaundice and non-cancer liver tumours, but this is rare. Very rarely, Dianette has also been linked with some forms of liver cancer in women who have taken it for a long time.

→ **See a doctor as soon as possible if you get severe pain in your stomach, or yellow skin or eyes (*jaundice*)**. You may need to stop taking Dianette.

2.3 Dianette should not be taken by some women

→ **Tell your doctor or family planning nurse** if you have any medical problems or illnesses.

Do not take Dianette if any of the following apply to you. Taking Dianette would put your health at risk.

- If you are **pregnant** or might be pregnant
- If you are **breast-feeding**
- If you have cancer affected by sex hormones – such as some **cancers of the breast or womb lining** or have ever had either of these conditions
- If you have **vaginal bleeding** that has not been explained by your doctor
- If you or anyone in your close family has ever had a problem with their blood circulation. This includes a **blood clot (*thrombosis*)** in the legs (*deep vein thrombosis*), lungs (*pulmonary embolism*), heart (**heart attack**), brain (**stroke**) or any other parts of the body
- If you have any condition which makes you **more at risk of a blood clot (*thrombosis*)** – see section 2.1, *Dianette and blood clots*)
- If you have **abnormal red blood cells (*sickle-cell anaemia*)**
- If you have disorders of **blood fat (*lipid*) metabolism**
- If you have ever had a **severe liver disease**
- If you have certain types of **jaundice (*Dubin-Johnson* or *Rotor syndromes*)**
- If you have ever had **liver tumours**
- If you have **severe diabetes affecting your blood vessels**
- If you have ever had a **blister-like rash** called *herpes gestationis*
- If you have had any of the following **problems while pregnant**:
 - **worsening of a hearing problem** called *otosclerosis*
 - **persistent itching**
- If you are **allergic (*hypersensitive*)** to any of the ingredients in Dianette.

→ **If you suffer from any of these, or get them for the first time while taking Dianette, contact your doctor as soon as possible. Do not take Dianette.**

2.4 Dianette can make some illnesses worse

Some of the conditions listed below can be made worse by taking Dianette. Or they may mean it is less suitable for you. You may still be able to take Dianette but you need to take special care and have check-ups more often.

- If you or your close family have ever had problems with your heart, circulation or blood clotting, such as **high blood pressure** or **sickle cell disease**
- If you have **varicose veins**
- If you have had **epilepsy** or **migraines**
- If you have **asthma**
- If you have had **severe depression**
- If you are **overweight** (*obese*)
- If you have any **gynaecological problems**, such as **fibroids**
- If you have ever had **inflamed veins** (*phlebitis*)
- If you have an inherited form of deafness known as **otosclerosis**
- If you have the disease of the nervous system called **multiple sclerosis**
- If you have the inherited disease called **porphyria**
- If you have **calcium deficiency with cramps** (*tetany*)
- If you have the movement disorder called **Sydenham's chorea**
- If you have ever had **breast problems**
- If you have **diabetes**
- If you have **an intolerance to contact lenses**
- If you have **systemic lupus erythematosus**
- If you have ever had **kidney** or **liver problems**, or have had **gall stones** in the past
- If you have **brown patches on your face or body** (*chloasma*)
- If you have **any disease that is prone to worsen during pregnancy**
- If anyone in your family has had **breast cancer**.

→ **Tell your doctor or family planning nurse if any apply to you.** Also tell them if you get any of these for the first time while taking Dianette, or if any get worse or come back, because you may need to stop taking it.

2.5 Taking other medicines

If you ever need to take another medicine at the same time as taking Dianette, always tell your doctor, pharmacist or dentist that you're taking Dianette. Also check the leaflets that come with all your medicines to see if they can be taken with hormonal contraceptives.

Some medicines can stop Dianette from working properly – for example:

- **some medicines used to treat epilepsy**
- **griseofulvin** (an anti-fungal medicine)
- **phenylbutazone** (an anti-inflammatory medicine)
- **certain antibiotics**
- **certain sedatives** (called *barbiturates*)
- **St. John's Wort** (a herbal remedy).

If you do need to take one of these medicines, Dianette may not be suitable for you or you may need to use extra contraception for a while. Your doctor, pharmacist or dentist can tell you if this is necessary and for how long.

Dianette can also affect how well other medicines work. For example, if you have diabetes, you may need to take more insulin or other anti-diabetic drugs while you take Dianette. Your doctor will tell you if this is necessary.

2.6 Taking Dianette with food and drink

There are no special instructions about food and drink while on Dianette.

2.7 Pregnancy and breast-feeding

Do not use Dianette if you are pregnant or are breast-feeding. If you think you might be pregnant, do a pregnancy test to confirm that you are before you stop taking Dianette.

2.8 Driving and using machines

Dianette has no known effect on the ability to drive or use machines.

2.9 Dianette contains lactose

If you have been told by your doctor that you have intolerance to some sugars, contact your doctor before using Dianette.

2.10 Dianette and Sunbeds/Sun-ray lamps (UV light)

Ultraviolet lamps are used by some women for acne as well as to tan the skin. This is not a very useful treatment for acne. Ultraviolet lamps and prolonged sunbathing should be avoided if you are taking Dianette, as their use increases the chance of chloasma, a patchy discolouration of the skin (as it does with ordinary oral contraceptives).

3. Taking Dianette

3.1 How to take it

If you are relying on this medicine to prevent pregnancy, always take Dianette as described below. Check with your doctor or family planning nurse if you are not sure.

Take Dianette every day for 21 days

Dianette comes in strips of 21 pills, each marked with a day of the week.

- Take your pill at the same time every day.
- Start by taking a pill marked with the correct day of the week.
- Follow the direction of the arrows on the strip. Take one pill each day, until you have finished all 21 pills.

- Swallow each pill whole, with water if necessary. Do not chew the pill.

Then have seven pill-free days

After you have taken all 21 pills in the strip, you have seven days when you take no pills.

Within a few days of taking the last pill from the strip, you should have a withdrawal bleed like a period. This bleed may not have finished when it is time to start your next strip of pills.

You don't need to use extra contraception during these seven pill-free days – as long as you have taken your pills correctly and start the next strip of pills on time.

Then start your next strip

Start taking your next strip of Dianette after the seven pill-free days – even if you are still bleeding. So if you take the last pill of one pack on a Friday, you will take the first pill of your next pack on the Saturday of the following week. Always start the new strip on time.

As long as you take Dianette correctly, you will always start each new strip on the same day of the week.

3.2 Starting Dianette

As a new user or starting Dianette after a break

It is best to take your first Dianette pill on the first day of your next period. By starting in this way, you will have contraceptive protection with your first pill.

Changing to Dianette from another contraceptive Pill

- **If you are currently taking a 21-day Pill:** start Dianette the next day after the end of the previous strip. You will have contraceptive protection with your first pill. You will not have a bleed until after your first strip of Dianette.
- **If you are taking a 28-day Pill:** start taking Dianette the day after your last active pill. You will have contraceptive protection with your first pill. You will not have a bleed until after your first strip of Dianette.
- **If you are taking a progestogen-only Pill (POP or 'mini Pill'):** start Dianette on the first day of bleeding, even if you have already taken the progestogen-only Pill for that day. You will have contraceptive cover straight away.

Starting Dianette after a miscarriage or abortion

If you have had a miscarriage or an abortion **during the first three months** of pregnancy, your doctor may tell you to start taking Dianette straight away. This means that you will have contraceptive protection with your first pill.

If you have had a miscarriage or an abortion **after the third month** of pregnancy, ask your doctor for advice. You may need to use extra contraception, such as condoms, for a short time.

Contraception after having a baby

If you have just had a baby, your doctor may advise you to start taking Dianette 21 days after delivery provided that you are fully mobile. You do not have to wait for a period. You will need to use another method of contraception, such as a condom, until you start Dianette and for the first 7 days of pill taking.

Do not take Dianette if you are breast-feeding

3.3 A missed pill

If you are less than 12 hours late with a pill, take it straight away. Keep taking your pills at the usual time. This may mean taking two pills in one day. Don't worry – your contraceptive protection should not be reduced.

If you are more than 12 hours late with a pill, or you have missed more than one pill, your contraceptive protection may be reduced.

- **Take the most recently missed pill** as soon as you remember, even if it means taking two at once. Leave any earlier missed pills in the pack.
- **Continue to take a pill every day for the next seven days** at your usual time.
- **If you come to the end of a strip of pills** during these seven days, start the next strip without taking the usual seven day break. You probably won't have a bleed until after you finish the second strip of pills, but don't worry. If you finish the second strip of pills and don't have a bleed, do a pregnancy test before starting another strip.
- **Use extra contraception for seven days after missing a pill**, such as condoms.
- If you have missed one or more pills from the first week of your strip (days 1 to 7) and you had sex in that week, you could become pregnant. Contact your doctor, family planning nurse or pharmacist for advice as soon as possible. They may recommend you use emergency contraception.

If you have missed any of the pills in a strip, and you do not bleed in the first pill-free break, you may be pregnant. Contact your doctor or family planning clinic, or do a pregnancy test yourself.

If you start a new strip of pills late, or make your 'week off' longer than seven days, you may not be protected from pregnancy. If you had sex in the last seven days, ask your doctor, family planning nurse or pharmacist for advice. You may need to consider emergency contraception. You should also use extra contraception, such as a condom, for seven days.

3.4 A lost pill

If you lose a pill,

Either take the last pill of the strip in place of the lost pill. Then take all the other pills on their proper days. Your cycle will be one day shorter than normal, but your contraceptive protection won't be affected. After your seven pill-free days you will have a new starting day, one day earlier than before.

Or if you do not want to change the starting day of your cycle, take a pill from a spare strip if you have one. Then take all the other pills from your current strip as usual. You can then keep the opened spare strip in case you lose any more pills.

3.5 If you are sick or have diarrhoea

If you are sick (*vomit*) or have very bad diarrhoea, your body may not get its usual dose of hormones from that pill. If you are **better within 12 hours of taking Dianette**, follow the instructions in section 3.4 *A lost pill*, and take another pill. If you are still sick or have diarrhoea **more than 12 hours after taking Dianette**, see section 3.3, *A missed pill*.

→ **Talk to your doctor if your stomach upset carries on or gets worse.** He or she may recommend another form of contraception.

3.6 Missed a period – could you be pregnant?

Occasionally, you may miss a withdrawal bleed. This could mean that you are pregnant, but that is very unlikely if you have taken your pills correctly. Start your next strip at the normal time. If you think that you might have put yourself at risk of pregnancy (for example, by missing pills or taking other medicines), or if you miss a second bleed, you should do a pregnancy test. You can buy these from the chemist or get a free test at your family planning clinic or doctors surgery. If you are pregnant, stop taking Dianette and see your doctor.

3.7 Taking more than one pill should not cause harm

It is unlikely that taking more than one pill will do you any harm, but you may feel sick, vomit or have some vaginal bleeding. Talk to your doctor if you have any of these symptoms.

3.8 When you want to get pregnant

If you are planning a baby, it's best to use another method of contraception after stopping Dianette until you have had a proper period. Your doctor or midwife relies on the date of your last natural period to tell you when your baby is due. However, it will not cause you or the baby any harm if you get pregnant straight away.

4. Possible side effects

Like all medicines, Dianette can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them.

→ **Tell your doctor, pharmacist or family planning nurse** if you are worried about any side effects which you think may be due to Dianette.

4.1 Serious side effects – see a doctor straight away

Signs of a blood clot:

- a **migraine** for the first time, a migraine that is worse than normal or unusually frequent or severe **headaches**
- any sudden **changes to your eyesight** (such as loss of vision or blurred vision)
- any sudden **changes to your hearing, speech, sense of smell, taste or touch**
- **pain or swelling in your leg**
- **stabbing pain when you breathe**
- **coughing** for no apparent reason
- **pain and tightness in the chest**
- sudden **weakness** or **numbness** in one side or part of your body
- **dizziness** or **fainting**.

Signs of a severe allergic reaction to Dianette:

- **swelling** of the **face, lips, mouth, tongue or throat**.

Signs of breast cancer include:

- **dimpling** of the skin
- **changes in the nipple**
- any **lumps** you can see or feel.

Signs of cancer of the cervix include:

- **vaginal discharge** that smells and/or contains blood
- unusual **vaginal bleeding**
- **pelvic pain**
- **painful sex**.

Signs of severe liver problems include:

- severe **pain in your upper abdomen**
- **yellow skin or eyes** (*jaundice*)
- **inflammation of the liver** (*hepatitis*)
- your whole body starts **itching**.

→ **If you think you may have any of these, see a doctor straight away.** You may need to stop taking Dianette.

4.2 Less serious side effects

- **bleeding and spotting between your periods** can sometimes occur for the first few months but this usually stops once your body has adjusted to Dianette. If it continues, becomes heavy or starts again, contact your doctor
- **headaches**
- **feeling sick, being sick and stomach upsets**
- **sore breasts**
- **depressive moods, loss of interest in sex**
- **putting on weight or losing weight**
- **chloasma** (yellow brown patches on the skin). This may happen even if you have been using Dianette for a number of months. Chloasma may be reduced by avoiding too much sunlight

- poor tolerance of contact lenses.

→ **Tell your doctor, pharmacist or family planning nurse** if you are worried about any side effects which you think may be due to Dianette. Also tell them if any existing conditions get worse while you are taking Dianette.

4.3 Bleeding between periods should not last long

A few women have a little unexpected bleeding or spotting while they are taking Dianette, especially during the first few months. Normally, this bleeding is nothing to worry about and will stop after a day or two. Keep taking Dianette as usual. The problem should disappear after the first few strips.

You may also have unexpected bleeding if you are not taking your pills regularly, so try to take your pill at the same time every day. Also, unexpected bleeding can sometimes be caused by other medicines.

→ **Make an appointment to see your doctor** if you get breakthrough bleeding or spotting that:

- carries on for more than the first few months
- starts after you've been taking Dianette for a while
- carries on even after you've stopped taking Dianette.

5. How to store Dianette

Keep all medicines out of the reach and sight of children.

Do not store above 25°C

Do not use Dianette after the expiry date shown on the strip.

Do not throw away any medicines down a drain or into a bin. Ask your pharmacist what to do with any medicines you do not want. This will help to protect the environment.

6. What is in Dianette and who makes it

What is in Dianette

Each box of Dianette contains three strips of 21 white tablets.

Each tablet contains: 2 micrograms of the anti-androgen, cyproterone acetate, and 35 micrograms of the oestrogen, ethinylestradiol.

Dianette also contains the inactive ingredients:

lactose, maize starch, povidone, talc, magnesium stearate (E572), sucrose, polyethylene glycol 6000, calcium carbonate (E170), titanium dioxide (E171), glycerol (E422), montan glycol wax, yellow ferric oxide pigment (E172).

The company that holds the product licence for Dianette is:

Bayer plc, Bayer House, Strawberry Hill, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 1JA.

Dianette is made by:

Bayer Schering Pharma AG, Berlin, Germany

or

Schering GmbH & Co Produktions KG, Weimar, Germany

or

Delpharm Lille SAS, Lys-Lez-Lannoy, France

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7. Skincare Tips

What can you do to clear your acne?

In addition to asking your pharmacist or your doctor for help, you can also help yourself by being aware of the things that can affect your acne.

Does washing alone heal acne?

Washing by itself is not going to heal your acne. All it does is keep the surface of the skin free from excess grease. While having clean skin is certain to have some beneficial effect, take care not to over-clean it. A certain amount of sebum is necessary to prevent the skin from becoming too dry, so excessive washing and scrubbing may do more harm than good.

Tip

Try to use a simple, unperfumed soap. If the soap you are using irritates your skin, use another one.

Do cosmetics aggravate acne?

It is tempting for girls to try to hide their acne with make-up. This rarely hides the spots, and it blocks the skin pores – a situation almost guaranteed to make the acne worse.

If you want to wear make-up, use it sparingly and choose a light non-greasy lotion, not cold creams.

Tip

Face powders, lipsticks, eyebrow pencil, eyeliner and eyelash make-up virtually never produce acne and rarely irritate the skin.

Are there any foods which should be avoided if you have acne?

Medical evidence has not shown conclusively that any particular foods cause acne. But if you do find that some foods seem to be related to sudden acne flare-ups, then try to avoid them for a while and see what happens. On food in general, your body and its ability to fight acne from the inside can only benefit from being fed a healthy and balanced diet.

Can other things make your acne worse?

Exposure to oils and grease (e.g., as a mechanic) can cause acne, as can other industrial chemicals. Very high temperatures, such as in a bakery, can result in excessive sweating and a worsening of your acne. On the other hand, sunlight is good for spots, and your acne may well improve during the summer months. However, don't use a sunlamp, or sunbathe for a long time without first taking advice from your doctor.

Are there times when acne gets worse?

Yes, too much stress and worry can often make your acne worse. Students often find that their acne flares up before and during exams, because stress increases the levels of hormones that induce acne. Also, under stress, people tend to pick at their acne.

Can the menstrual cycle affect acne?

Yes, it is not uncommon for acne to get worse for about 7-10 days before the onset of menstruation. This is due to the monthly changes in hormone levels.

TIP

Dianette or certain contraceptive pills should lessen the effect of pre-menstrual acne.

Does squeezing help clear up acne?

Although the temptation is sometimes very strong, try not to squeeze your spots. Vigorous squeezing damages the skin and tends to spread the infection and inflammation and to delay healing. In some cases, it can cause permanent scarring. On those occasions when you just can't help yourself, squeeze the spot gently and be sure to dab on some disinfectant afterwards.

How long does it take for acne to disappear?

Just about everything concerning acne is 'unfair' – and length of time it takes to respond to treatment is no exception. Even the most effective products take time, sometimes a long time, before you can see any significant improvement. It will usually take several months of treatment before your acne clears up. You should also realise that as long as your tendency to acne persists, you are likely to need further treatment from time to time. So try to be patient, keep using your treatment regularly, and follow your doctor's instructions.

Does acne only occur in teenagers?

No, although it is mainly a teenage problem, acne can occur both in early childhood and in adults even into their thirties and forties.

Can clothes affect acne?

Yes. If you have acne on your body, try to wear loose clothes and avoid irritating fabrics such as wool and synthetic materials. Keep your underclothes, and clothes that come into contact with areas affected by acne, very clean.