

## Fact Sheet

### Active Acne and Acne Scarring

**Please read this leaflet carefully this forms the basis of your consent for treatment. If there is anything you do not understand or are concerned about please raise this during your consultation.**

Acne is a very common condition and about 9 out of 10 teenagers will develop some degree of acne. In most cases, acne lasts about 4 or 5 years before resolving, however unfortunately it can continue to be a problem into and through the adult years. Acne may also present itself in later life commonly known as 'Late Onset Acne' when there has been no history of spots in the teenage years. Acne ranges from a mild, to very severe condition, the effects of which cannot be underestimated. We understand that living and coping with Acne and any resultant scarring may have a negative impact on your social, personal and professional relationships as well as reducing your own self-esteem

#### What causes acne?

There are a number of small glands (sebaceous glands) lying just below the surface of the skin that produce oil (sebum) which seeps through tiny pores to keeps our skin supple and smooth. This is a normal process but sometimes it goes wrong and this can be the cause of acne.

- The amount of sebum produced is increased during teenage years due to hormonal changes that take place at puberty. Some people however, make more sebum than others. Occasionally some drugs will cause excessive sebum production.
- The pores can become blocked due to the thickening of the top layer of cells in the pores and the shedding of skin cells, which then become lodged in the pores. Sometimes this is aggravated by external factors such as pollution and make up.
- Sebum collects under the blocked pores which swell to cause whiteheads and blackheads (comedones), these are small spots on the skin. The spots may enlarge into pimples (papules).
- Inflammation may develop around the blocked pores due to the immune reaction against the bacteria (*Propionibacterium. acnes*) that lives and multiplies in the sebum of the blocked pores. This process can lead to the formation of large spots (pustules, nodules and cysts)

#### What is the aim of treatment for active acne?

The aim of treatment is to clear the acne and prevent any scarring. There are various treatments available that work in different ways including the following:

- Unplugging the blocked pores
- Killing or reducing the bacteria in the sebum and skin
- Reducing skin inflammation
- Preventing sebum being made

#### What treatment options are available (over the counter, from your GP or at specialist clinics)?

- *Topical treatments* – can be used for mild acne or in combination with other treatments for moderate and severe acne. Most preparations work by unblocking pores, reducing bacteria and reducing inflammation. Some of these products can cause skin irritation and need to be used cautiously.
- *Antibiotics* – are used for moderate or severe acne. Antibiotics kill the bacteria in the sebum and skin. A 3-6 month course is usually required before the treatment is effective and the acne can return if treatment is stopped. Some people may find it difficult to take antibiotics for this long and sometimes the bacteria develop resistance to the antibiotic rendering it ineffective.
- *Hormonal treatments* – can be used for moderate and severe acne. They work by reducing sebum production but are not always well tolerated by patients
- *Isotretinoin (Roaccutane)* – can be prescribed for severe acne by consultant dermatologists only. It reduces the amount of sebum produced by the glands and is usually very effective, but can have serious side effects
- *Laser treatment* – N-Lite laser can be used to effectively treat active acne and pitted acne scars. The Pixel Laser effectively treats pitted scars and can also reduce associated hyperpigmentation.
- *IPL/ AFT treatment* – The AFT420 can be used to treat active acne. A series of treatment are required at regular intervals.

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#### **Which treatment options are available at the Laserase Clinic for treatment of Active Acne?**

##### **Regen-Lite Laser**

This is a pulsed dye laser that has proven to be successful when treating the moderate and less severe forms of acne. It emits a low energy beam which reacts specifically with the red blood cells in the deeper parts of the skin to kill off bacteria present in the sebum and skin. This stimulates the release of mediators which help to reduce the inflammatory reaction around individual spots and stimulates repair of damaged skin. The vessels and skin are not damaged and remain virtually untouched.

In a study carried out by Dr Chu, Consultant Dermatologist, and President Patron of the Acne Support Group (Published in the Lancet October 2003) there was on average a 1-2 point improvement on the Leeds scale as judged by the patient's themselves. Some people however did not respond as well, unfortunately there is no way of predicting this. This compares favourably with the best antibiotic and isotretinoin treatment without the side effects. However, some people have reported their acne has completely disappeared after the first treatment.

##### **AFT420 Intense Pulsed Light**

This Pulsed Light Treatment was developed for the treatment of Active Acne. Effective and comfortable, the AFT420 works quickly and thoroughly as it permeates the tissue, precisely targeting the acne-causing bacteria. This sets off a chemical reaction which attacks and destroys the bacteria, stopping acne at its source. A series of treatments are required at close intervals (generally 8 treatments over a 4 week period).

##### **Chemical peels**

Using gentle fruit acids, with soothing anti-inflammatory properties, our chemical peels can soothe irritated skin and work to dissolve and control sebum. Deep cleansing facials can reduce oil without drying the skin, drawing out impurities and helping to heal acne.

##### **Advanced topical skin care products for home use**

We currently stock 4 ranges of advanced skin care products which between them provide an effective method of controlling and reducing acne outbreaks. A consultation with one of our nurses will identify which products are recommended.

#### **Which treatment options are available at the Laserase Clinic for treatment of Pigmented Acne Scars?**

##### **AFT540 Intense Pulsed Light**

The AFT540's selective pulsed light energy is precisely absorbed by the melanin in the target area without damaging the surrounding healthy skin. The melanin is broken into tiny fragments which are then absorbed by the body and eliminated. By providing smooth, consistent light pulses, the energy delivered to the skin is gentle and effective. Successive treatments are required, usually at 3 weekly intervals, so that this whole procedure is repeated and the body can remove as much pigment as possible.

##### **Pixel laser**

The Harmony Pixel is an ablative laser which is used to improve the skin's texture and whilst doing so also picks up on hyperpigmentation in the treated areas. Patients experience a sun burn like sensation after treatment, this is generally neutralised with Vaseline. The pigmented areas of the skin may darken temporarily and can feel tight for approx. 48 hours. Swelling is mild and generally resolves in 2-3 days.

##### **Pigment Balancing Masque**

- a. To improve appearance of hyperpigmentation
- b. Accelerates cell renewal and breaks up existing melanin clusters
- c. For problematic and oily skin – sanitises areas affected by acne related pigmentation

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#### Chemical peels

SM (Salicylic Mandelic) gel peels are designed to improve skin texture and can aid in clearing acne and reducing hyperpigmentation. These can be very effective when used alongside our range of laser treatments and/or advanced home use skin care products.

#### Advanced topical skin care products

We currently stock 4 ranges of advanced skin care products which between them provide an effective method of treating hyperpigmentation caused by acne outbreaks. A consultation with one of our nurses will identify which products are recommended.

#### Which treatment options are available at the Laserase Clinic for treatment of Pitted Acne Scars?

#### Pixel laser

The Harmony Pixel is an FDA approved, fractional ablative laser which is designed to improve the quality and the texture of the skin whilst stimulating collagen regeneration. It is believed by doctors to be a major breakthrough in treating acne scars. It combines the proven effectiveness of an ablative approach whilst maintaining a level of patient comfort. It can be used on the face and neck, chest, back, arms and hands.

It creates a micro injury without disturbing the surrounding tissue. Those micro injured areas start the process of healing as collagen remodels, skin tightens and the skin texture improves. No anaesthetic is required for this procedure. Most commonly patients may feel some slight warmth with the pulse of the laser experiencing minimal discomfort, and feeling no more than a slight tingling sensation and a pleasant warming as the light enters the skin. Patients then experience a sun burn like sensation afterwards that is generally neutralized with a gentle moisturising gel. Sessions can last anything from 10mins up to 1 hour depending on the size of the treatment area. The skin will be red and can feel tight for approx. 48 hours and then it will have a pinkish tone for 5-7 days. This is a normal sign that skin is healing deeply. Some people, especially those with sensitive skin, may get a histamine response: these are small bumps that will settle down on their own within a very short time. Swelling is mild and generally resolves in 2-3 days. At the time of print no other side effects have been noted although of course this cannot be guaranteed. A series of treatments will be required to achieve optimum results.

#### Regen-Lite Laser

The Regen-Lite Laser targets the blood vessels just below the skin, by using a very low level of light energy to stimulate the body's own cells to produce collagen. The result is that over time, pitted scars reduce in depth, and sometimes disappear altogether. Because collagen is laid down slowly over a period of months, **there is no immediate effect**. In the many cases where one treatment does achieve a result, this can be improved by keeping the collagen building. A follow up treatment may be recommended between one and three months depending on the area being treated.

#### Derma-roller

Derma-roller micro-needling can significantly improve appearance of acne scars by stimulating skin to regenerate and repair itself. This safely and naturally creates smoother, brighter, healthier looking skin. New collagen is formed, new skin cells are generated and blood supply is enhanced – providing a natural and long lasting enhancement.

As with all medical treatments it is possible that not everyone will respond to their chosen treatment. Some patients may obtain a less than average response or may not respond at all.

#### How much will it cost?

The cost of the treatment is dependent upon the area treated; whilst an approximate cost may be given the actual cost will be detailed within the consultation appointment.

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**A consultation is required before embarking on any treatment regime, test patches are also undertaken.**

**A parent or guardian must accompany anyone aged under 18.**

#### ***About the Clinic***

Laserase Bolton has been based at Bolton Royal Hospital since 1994. Throughout we have been fully registered with the appropriate governing body, who regularly inspects our clinic. You have the reassurance that your treatment will be conducted by a fully qualified and experienced doctor or nurse. All of our doctors and nurses have extensive training and experience; they are continually updated and assessed on new techniques.

We would be delighted to tell you about any treatments we offer - visit our website: [www.laserase-bolton.co.uk](http://www.laserase-bolton.co.uk)

For further information or to book an appointment please contact us:

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