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Can Evening Primrose Oil Cure Hormonal Acne?

by Anna Fryxell. Posted on August 10, 2015



Like clockwork, I get at least one big cystic pimple on my chin just before I start my period. Experts say that cystic acne, or really any sort of acne around your chin, is often caused by your hormones, so the timing makes perfect sense. While I'm well aware of why it's happening, I've never been very clear on what to do about my hormonal acne besides take birth control. But for me, that's not an option. The only thing that's really helped so far is limiting the amount of dairy I consume. And guess what? I saw a world of difference after I broke up with my daily breakfast yogurt. Even though it made a significant difference, my chin is sadly not acne-free yet.

But here's a different solution: I recently went in for a facial with aesthetician and skin whisperer Susan Ciminelli and she told me to take evening primrose oil supplements to help with my pesky chin acne.

"If taken daily, it helps to bring balance to women around the time of their period, when their bodies are releasing toxins through the blood flow," says Ciminelli. She explained that the skin is an eliminative organ, which means that the body uses it to release waste. When toxins build up in the body, they are released and show up as acne, which a lot of the time shows up on the chin. That's because it's the body part that represents female organs. If the hormones are balanced and the body is free of toxins, those breakouts theoretically won't happen.

After my facial, I wanted to know a little more, so I asked Great Neck, NY, dermatologist Jeannette Graf, MD, about this could-be skin savior. She explained that while it still needs more research, it makes sense that evening primrose oil can help with hormonal acne. It's rich in omega-6 (gamma-linoleic acid) which helps produce anti-inflammatory prostaglandins (fatty acid compounds that have hormone-like effects). And it's also rich in lignans, which are also helpful with hormonal acne.

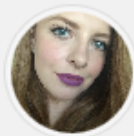
After two expert nods of approval, I decided to give it a try. Both Ciminelli and Dr. Graf told me to choose a brand for it's amount of purity. I did some research and purchased a bottle of *Solgar Evening Primrose Oil* (\$12), and have taken it daily for the past six weeks. Unfortunately, I'm still not breakout-free, but Dr. Graf says it can take several months to see any real results.

She also told me you can use evening primrose oil topically to help with irritated or dry skin. You just break a capsule open and apply it to the area you want. Relief from those symptoms is usually immediate.

As for side effects, it really just depends on the person and the brand you choose. When taken orally, there's a risk of abdominal pain, bloating, cramps, and dizziness, she says. I personally haven't experienced any of these. That said, there are a few people that should definitely get approval from a physician before taking it. That includes pregnant or nursing women, anyone with low blood pressure, anyone on blood thinners or insulin, and anyone with a seizure disorder.

I plan to continue to take them daily to see if my hormonal chin acne gets any better, so wish me luck!

Written by Anna Fryxell



Writer and producer at Mixed Makeup. Redhead. Freckly. Human guinea pig. Lover of pretty things, nachos and new friends! Follow me on Instagram and Twitter: @AnnaFryxell



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