

Dr. Van Aardt's stepwise acne treatment approach

Acne Vulgaris is a chronic skin disease influenced by many factors. It is not curable and the goal of treatment therefore is to achieve a state of remission. Due to the chronic nature of the disease and the social implications of its appearance, acne can be a very frustrating disease.

Any new treatment initiative will often take 2 to 3 months to have a visual impact on the degree of acne. Therefore patience is required on the part of the physician and the patient and new treatment initiatives added one step at a time in order of importance until results are evident. Care must be taken to not fall into the trap of abandoning one initiative prematurely when an early response is not noted. Instead additional treatment steps should be added at the right intervals until the desired result is achieved.

The approach to acne treatment depends largely on the type of acne and the patient's skin type. Correct diagnosis is essential in deciding on the correct treatment approach from day one. For example, treatment for inflammatory acne will differ significantly from comedonal acne and if rosacea is present, it will also require special consideration.

Treating acne is akin to losing weight. It takes discipline, time, patience and a good plan of action while relying on a support team of professionals including a knowledgeable aesthetician and a physician. Treatment steps act like little weights on a scale. When the treatment influence is sufficient, it tips the scale and disease remission is achieved. Flare-ups can occur due to many reasons including illness, stress, dietary factors and hormonal factors and occasionally rescue treatments may have to be prescribed.

The correct approach to acne treatment starts with an exact skin care regimen to be followed meticulously including cleansing, toning, exfoliation and applicable moisturiser. There is good reason for each and every step and the particular products used may differ depending on an individual's skin type and sensitivity. Correct exfoliation is very important for acne skin and vigorous scrubbing is not allowed.

In addition topical and oral antibiotics, oral contraceptives like Diane 35, Benzoin Peroxide, glycolic or salicylic acid, Retin-A, photodynamic therapy (PDT) with Blue light and or IPL treatments can be added as required. Acne scars can be improved with laser and PDT and injections of dermal filler can improve cratered scars.

Regular follow up with your clinical or medical aesthetician and myself will ensure ongoing assessment to adapt treatment steps as your needs may vary over time.