

Difference Between Zit and Pimple

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Key Difference – Zit vs Pimple

Pimple and zit are two interchangeably used words. But in a medical perspective, there is a slight difference between zit and pimple. Although the difference is only a small one, understanding it would be very useful in providing the most appropriate treatment to the patient. The key difference between zit and pimple is that **pimples abundantly occur in adolescents whereas zits can occur in any age group including teenagers.**

What is a Pimple?

A pimple ([acne](#)) is a [chronic inflammation](#) of the pilosebaceous units that results in comedones, papules, [cysts](#), pustules, and scars. It is one of the most common skin complaints that affects most adolescents.

It is not the physical scar of a pimple gives that creates problems. Since they appear in adolescents who are spending a transitional period of their life, pimples may cause embarrassment, shame and lack of confidence and even be the reason for suicidal thoughts in most extreme circumstances.

Pathogenesis

Lesions may arise in the pilosebaceous follicles due to,

- Increased sebum secretion
- Pilosebaceous duct hyperkeratosis
- Colonization of the duct with *Propionibacterium acnes*
- Release of inflammatory mediators including cytokines

Pilosebaceous follicles get blocked due to the increased production of sebum and hyperkeratosis. These obstructed glands are then invaded by *Propionibacterium acnes* whose virulence factors activate the Toll-like receptors leading to inflammation and the release of pro-inflammatory cytokines. The comedone or [blackhead](#) is the hallmark of a pimple. In acne prone skin, early microscopic blackheads can be seen. In patients having moderate to severe acne, blackheads become indistinct due to the predominant inflammatory lesions

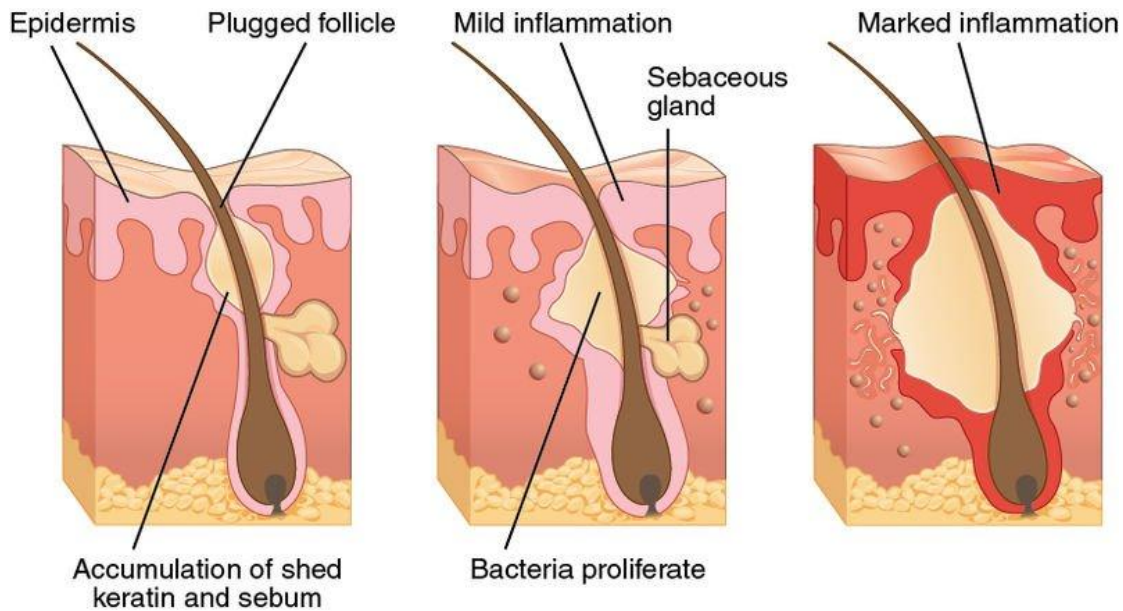


Figure 01: Pimple Formation

Clinical Features

Blackheads (dilated pores with black plugs of [melanin](#) containing keratin) or whiteheads (small cream colored domed shaped papules) may appear at around the age of twelve. They evolve into inflammatory papules, pustules or cysts. Acne arises from the [sebaceous](#) glands in the dense and greasy areas like the face and upper torso.

Several varieties of acne have been described,

- Chloracne-which is due to halogenated industrial chemicals
- Acne excoriée-due to squeezing
- Conglobate-burrowing abscesses and sinuses with scarring
- Infantile-occasionally seen in infants, triggered by maternal androgens
- Acne fulminans-severe acne with systemic effects, deeply inflamed and ulcerated with fever and weight loss
- Drug induced
- Physical

Management

Over the counter ointments are widely used by patients without a doctor's advice. But the management of acne should be based on the type, the extent of acne lesions

and the patient's mentality. Topical agents are effective against mild acne but systemic medications have to be given for severe cases.

Medications given in the management of acne are,

- Benzyl peroxide-a cream or a gel which reduces the number of *acnes*. It may cause irritation or contact allergy
- Tretinoin (Retin A cream or gel)-reduces the number of blackheads, can cause skin irritation
- Antibiotics-Clindamycin, erythromycin alone or with zinc or benzyl peroxide
- Newer topical agents- like azelaic acid, isotretinoin, adapalene

Treatment of Acne

Severity	Treatment
Mild acne	Topical retinoid, azelaic acid or salicylic acid
Comedonal	Topical retinoid+topical antimicrobial or azelaic acid+topical antimicrobial
Inflammatory	
Moderate acne	Oral antibiotic+topical retinoid±Benzyl peroxide
(Alternative for females)	Oral antiandrogen+topical retinoid/azelaic acid±topical antimicrobial
Severe acne	Oral isotretinoin
	High-dose oral antibiotic+topical retinoid+Benzyl peroxide
	Oral antiandrogen+topical retinoid ± topical antimicrobial
(Alternative for females)	Topical benzyl peroxide

What is a Zit?

Zit is a skin disease that can occur in any individual regardless of the age. It is more common among the males. This condition mainly affects the forehead and chin.

Causes

Main causes are

- Stress
- Body toxins
- Excessive consumption of fat abundant food
- Use of cosmetics
- Hereditary causes
- Hormonal imbalance in puberty and pre-menstrual phases



Figure 02: Zit

Treatment

Zits should be compressed with warm water to avoid the oozing out of pus.

Prevention

- Using a soap-free face cleanser or astringent,
- Yogurt face masks
- oil-free moisturizer.
- Increasing the consumption of foods that are rich in antioxidants, such as berries

What is the difference between Zit and Pimple?

Zit vs Pimple	
Zits occur when melanin and oil glands in the skin get clogged.	Pimples occur when there is a blockage in the pilosebaceous units.
Infectiousness	
If the zits are damaged forcefully, the pus coming out of them can infect the adjacent areas as well.	These are not infectious all the time.
Age Group	
This affects all age groups equally.	This is more frequently seen among adolescents.
Cause	
Main causes are fatty food, cosmetics, hormonal imbalance and stress,	The main cause is the gluing of shedding skin with the sebum which creates a favorable environment for the superimposed bacterial infections.

Summary – Zit vs Pimple

Zit and pimple are two common dermatological conditions. The main difference between zit and pimple is that pimples are more frequently seen among the adolescents while zits affect all age groups. Maintenance of a good personal hygiene is extremely helpful in preventing these skin diseases

References:

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2. Kumar, Parveen J., and Michael L. Clark. *Kumar & Clark clinical medicine*. Edinburgh: W.B. Saunders, 2009. Print.

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