

If You Have Acne, You MUST Follow These 11 Essential Makeup Rules

News flash: Caking on makeup is only making it worse.

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Check your labels



BECKY STARSMORE/SHUTTERSTOCK

There's mixed evidence about which—if any—makeup ingredients actually cause acne, says board-certified dermatologist Fayne Frey, MD, FAAD. Still, everyone's skin is different, and certain ingredients might make yours break out. Even though there's no standard for labeling products "noncomedogenic," which supposedly won't clog pores, Dr. Frey recommends using them anyway. "Reputable cosmetic manufacturers often do some type of testing of their products to determine whether the product causes clogged pores or acne," she says.

Stay away from oils



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Having oily skin doesn't mean you _____ to stay away from every oil, but your skin could be sensitive to certain ones. "Although most individuals will have absolutely no problem applying cosmetics that contain oil on their faces, certain oils (mineral oil, sesame oil, cocoa butter, coconut oil) may cause irritation and breakouts in some individuals," says Dr. Frey. If your skin seems sensitive to oils, try silicone-based makeup instead, she says. But some say silicone can lead to breakouts too, so experiment with what works best for you.

Know what comes next



BECKY STARSMORE/SHUTTERSTOCK

Which comes first: concealer or foundation? Most women start with concealer, but your face's actual foundation should be, well, foundation, says makeup artist Shara Strand. “That way, there is a base for the concealer to sit on, and they wouldn't need as much,” she says. You’ll be able to cover up even the largest blemishes without overdoing the makeup. Check out these other sloppy-looking makeup mistakes.

Start with primer



TARAS TSYBUKH/SHUTTERSTOCK

Acne-prone skin tends to be oily, too, meaning your makeup slides right off by lunchtime. Start with primer to make sure your foundation actually stays in place. “Smooth only on the forehead, nose, cheeks and chin,” says Kelli J. Bartlett, director of artistry for GLAMSQUAD. She recommends Step 1: Skin EQUALIZER by Make Up For Ever, which has a mattifying version that fights excess oil. Don't miss more ways to fake clear skin with makeup.

Get rid of the red



PHOTO/SHUTTERSTOCK

Piling skin-tone foundation and concealer onto a bright red zit can be a lost cause when you're trying to cover up. Use a green color-corrector to neutralize the redness. "Use a light amount on the blemish, and then tap concealer on top of it," says makeup artist Hillary Kline.

Use your hands



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Applying makeup is the one exception to the rule about keeping your hands off your face. Unless you're good about cleaning your makeup tools, brushes and sponges can hold on to bacteria and irritate acne-prone areas. "I recommend using fingers and a gentle touch when applying both concealer and foundation," says [greatbeauty.com](https://www.greatbeauty.com) celebrity makeup expert Spencer Barnes. Just make sure you wash your hands before you start, he says.

Start small



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Piling on a thick layer of makeup will just draw attention to the bumps on your face, even if they're a nice skin tone instead of bright red. "Always start with the least amount of product, and then build," says Strand. "The pressure should be light and loose." She says tapping concealer with your finger to blend is the key to making it look natural.

Find makeup that fights for you



BECKY STARSMORE/SHUTTERSTOCK

Don't ditch the acne-fighting efforts after you've applied all your gels and creams. Some primers and foundations include ingredients that don't just cover blemishes—they help heal and prevent future ones too. Celebrity makeup artist Archangela Chelsea Yusuf recommends hunting for products with salicylic acid and tea tree oil, which both help clear up breakouts. Learn more ways to find the best foundation for your skin type.

Consider a powder



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If your acne seems particularly sensitive to makeup, you might want to consider swapping out your liquid formulas for powder. “When you have products that are water based, it needs a preservative,” says Dr. Frey. “It also has oil in it, and oil and water can’t mix, so it has an emulsifier.” Those emulsifiers help mix your makeup, but certain ones could irritate your skin, she says. She recommends nixing liquid for a powder, which don’t use those same irritating ingredients. As a bonus, powder will control oil and help your makeup last longer, says Strand.

Look at the powder ingredients



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Cakey makeup will just highlight your blemishes even more, so pick the right powder. For a natural-looking finish, go with nylon and kaolin, suggests makeup artist Kayla Calloway. “Powders with nylon and kaolin give skin a blurred, airbrushed effect,” she says. She recommends Cover FX Pressed Mineral Foundation, which has kaolin.

Don't forget to take it off



PHOTO/SHUTTERSTOCK

Just because you've followed all the right steps doesn't mean you can keep that makeup on forever. "One thing is for certain—you must remove your makeup and cleanse your skin every night," says Bartlett. Leaving on makeup—and all the pollutants clinging to it—overnight could clog your pores and keep your skin from going through its usual refresh process while you sleep. When you do clean it off, avoid these face-washing mistakes.