



SPOTS & STRIPES

EARTH-FRIENDLY SKIN, HAIR & BODY CARE, SPECIALLY FORMULATED FOR TEENS & TWEENS

Dear Parent,

We get SO many questions about skin and skincare, we thought it would be a good idea to start putting all the information in one place. Somewhere you or your child can go to when you have a query or a problem that a simple Google search just can't answer. Somewhere that has absolutely everything you need to know about tween/teen skin.

This letter is the start of that. But we wanted to begin by speaking directly to your tweens/teens (after all, it's their skin we're talking about!). So, this letter is written especially for them. Please pass it on to them in whichever form is the most useful.

Yes, you can read it, too (there's some good stuff in here!), but we really want to talk to your incredible children.

Love,

Charlotte

Charlotte-Anne
FOUNDER



Hello!

I'm Charlotte and these are my girls, Anouk and Bo. They were quite small when I first started to think about creating my skincare company, Spots & Stripes. They had pretty perfect skin and we actually used natural baby products until they were about 10 (I know, amazing that they didn't notice 😊)

They've grown up so much in the last few years and both went through times where they really struggled with their skin. I could see the same happening to their friends, too. The usual teen stuff: breakouts, blackheads, congestion. They were miserable! Plus, I know that my daughters found it totally awkward when I talked to them about their skin and what we could do to help clear it up. Like all parents, I was simply trying to help. But they often thought I was being critical or sometimes just completely boring! And I get it!

So, I thought it might be a good idea to write a few ideas down about keeping your skin healthy when you are a tween or teen. You might hate the idea of your parents talking to you about your skin. But, perhaps if it came from someone else's mother - who also happens to be the boss of an award-winning skincare company - it might feel a bit different.

My plan is to help you understand what happens to your skin when you hit puberty and give you some easy things you can do to keep it healthy as your body changes and grows.



What is acne? (And why do you get it?)

Acne is what we experts call an inflammatory condition. What that means is that your skin - specifically the hair follicles (another word for the pores in the skin where hair grows - which, btw, you have all over your body including your face) - gets upset by what is going on inside your body: hormones, skin oils and bacteria. But, also, by stuff that is going on outside your body. Acne problems are usually caused by a combination of both.

**Let's talk about those inside things
and the outside things and what you can
do about them...**



ACNE FROM THE INSIDE: Hormones

Your hormones are a huge acne trigger. When you hit puberty, your hormone levels go up, big time, especially the hormones called androgens (testosterone is the famous one). The upside of Testosterone is that it causes male development in boys and gives muscle and bone strength to girls (yes, even girls have testosterone in them!). The downside, is that it gives your sebaceous glands (the oil glands at the base of every hair) the green light for producing loads of sebum.

Now, sebum is useful because it protects your skin and stops it getting dry. But, when you have too much of it, things start to go wrong. Instead of getting on with the job of looking after your skin, it clumps together with dead skin cells in your pores. When that oil gets trapped, it attracts a sebum-loving bacteria, which parties in your pores creating the redness and swelling that you know as spots. Yuck!

Okay, so everyone experiences hormonal changes during puberty. That's a fact. But, we know what you're asking: does that mean you are definitely going to get spotty? And is there absolutely zero you can do about it? And btw, why do some teens go through puberty with perfect skin and others don't?

Here's the deal. The number of spots you're going to get, how bad they'll be and how long your acne lasts depends on a few factors:

★ The level of testosterone in your body (boys have higher levels of testosterone than girls, which is why boys tend to get more spots).

★ Differences in the way your body reacts to that testosterone and the spots it causes. Some bodies react badly!

★ The type of bacteria sitting on your skin. There is a whole load of them!. And the iffy ones, where acne is concerned, are called Propionibacterium acnes - they go rogue when they're trapped in sebum-filled pores.

★ Your genes - if your mother and/or father had acne, chances are you will get it, too. Sorry! Try not to blame them, remember they had to go through it too!



FOOD

What you eat can make a huge difference to your skin. Certain foods cause hormones to surge in your body, which can trigger spots. And other foods can help your skin look great. As your body is a total hormone party right now, it makes sense to eat things that are going to help your body function better.

So, here, we're making it simple for you:

Eat Less

- **Milk and dairy products** - why? They raise levels of Insulin-like Growth Factor - a hormone already elevated by puberty - which, uh-oh, increases the production of sebum and worsens acne.
- **Chicken and red meat** - why? They contain something called leucine, which stimulates the skin's oil glands and makes breakouts more likely.
- **Sugary foods** - why? Foods with a high glycemic index lead to high insulin levels and that leads to higher production of androgens and sebum. Bad! Bad! Bad!
- **White bread, pasta and white rice** - why? They have a high glycemic index. See above!

- **Fried food** - why? Incredibly, there isn't much evidence to show that eating fries and fast food will directly make your spots worse. But that's no excuse to eat them, because they're linked to lots of nasty diseases like heart disease, cancer, diabetes and obesity.

Remember, we're not saying you can't eat these things at all. That's not realistic. Just don't let them be a big part of your diet.

Eat More

- **Wholegrains** (such as wholewheat bread, brown rice and quinoa) - why? They have a lower glycemic index so can minimise the appearance of acne.
- **Fruit and vegetables** (particularly red and yellow peppers, carrots, tomatoes, spinach and apricots) - why? See above!
- **Beans and peas** - why? See above!
- **Vitamins A, D, E** (find Vitamin A and D in tuna, eggs, mackerel, salmon and some breakfast cereals. Vitamin E in nuts and broccoli) - why? Studies show that people lacking these vitamins have more acne.
- **Probiotics** (found in kefir, live yoghurt, etc) - why? Seriously, these are the cure for most skin problems! Mainly because they increase the good bacteria in your gut. And a balanced, healthy gut reduces inflammation all through your body - including the acne on your face.
- **Turmeric** - why? It contains curcumin, a genius antioxidant that reduces inflammation, regulates blood sugar levels and reduces the amount of acne-causing bacteria on your skin.
- **Zinc** (take it as a supplement or find it in sunflower and pumpkin seeds, shellfish and meat) - why? People with low levels of zinc are more prone to acne.



STRESS

Have you noticed that you break out more when you are stressed? This is because stress makes your body release 'stress hormones' - mostly cortisol and adrenaline. Cortisol causes increased oil production and that - yep, you know it - leads to clogged pores and acne. Stress also makes your skin more sensitive and reactive. So, as well as causing acne flare ups, stress is going to make any eczema, psoriasis or rosacea you might have, worse.

The trouble is, as you get older, life just gets more stressful! Homework, exams, sports matches, school plays and performances can all make life a bit overwhelming. Then you have all the stuff that goes on in friendship groups and your family. It's hard to handle it all! But, if you get too stressed, it's probably going to show in your skin.

So, what can you do to keep stress under control? Here are our tips:



● **Exercise** (ideally, exercise outside) - There are serious scientific studies that show that exercise releases endorphins (aka happy chemicals) into your body. The result: you feel happier and less stressed.

● **Spend time with people who make you happy** - we mean the friends who support you and make you laugh. Avoid the ones who create nothing but drama and negativity.

● **Breathe!** - yes, seriously, breathing deeply and rhythmically can have an instant and powerful effect on how your body feels. Try an app like Breathwrk for guided sessions to reduce anxiety, increase energy and boost focus.

● **Make sure you get enough sleep** - we're talking proper, high quality sleep. Which means putting your phone away and going to bed before midnight and getting 7 to 8 hours.

● **Take some time out** - do something you enjoy, even if it's only for a few minutes. Listen to music. Read a book. Stare out of the window and daydream.

● **Try meditating** - an app like Headspace is brilliant at helping you clear and still your mind. And gives you the ability to move your focus away from negative thinking.

● **Prioritise and keep things in perspective** - okay, I know that chemistry test feels like the end of the world. But, believe us, it isn't. You will be okay!

● **Talk to someone** - if things really do get too much, ask a parent, teacher or friend for support. You can also talk to a nurse or your GP.

ACNE FROM THE OUTSIDE

Your skin is literally the biggest organ in your body. It's an amazing, living thing that protects you from damaging sunlight, temperature extremes, and acts as a protective barrier to harmful chemicals and infections.



Because it's living, it also absorbs about 60% of what you put on it (some studies show that your face absorbs even more!). Crazy, I know! But it's something to think about. If you are using junky skincare, it's going to have the same effect on your skin that 'junk food' has on your body.



What is 'junk' skincare? It's products that are full of the chemical 'nasties' (the kind your parents were keen to avoid putting on your skin when you were little). The truth is, it's probably even more important to avoid them now, as some of these chemicals act as hormone disruptors and your teen hormones are already all over the place...



Here are some options for healthy skincare & some great pointers for limiting the outside factors that cause acne:



A spot-reducing skincare routine



You might think that an anti-acne skincare routine is all about drying out those spots, stripping that sebum and washing your face five times a day. Wrong! You actually need to treat acne-prone skin incredibly gently. That's why our Gentle Cleansing Lotions and spot-treating Super Balm don't dry out the skin or upset its natural balance - and contain as many ingredients that soothe and moisturise, as ones that zap bacteria and downsize inflammation. Cleansing twice a day is enough, too (t-zone only - which is

skincare speak for your forehead, nose and chin - if your cheeks are still perfectly clear of spots and congestion). Just massage our cleansing lotion into dry skin for a couple of minutes and wipe it off with a clean damp flannel, or one of our muslin cloths (brilliant at lifting away dead skin cells and wiping off dirt and oil without irritating your skin). Use just these two products for a couple of weeks (yep, don't even use moisturiser) and see if your skin starts to get clearer and brighter.



Skin turnover takes six weeks, so it can take that long for a routine to make a difference, so don't give up.



Correct cleansing is something you have to learn, just like you learn how to brush your teeth when you're small.

Other important stuff!

Where your skin is concerned, the little things DO matter. If you want to increase your chances of staying spot-free take notes:

- **Remember, acne is incredibly common**

more than 80% of us get it at some point in our lives. It's not a life sentence. It's a sign that things are out of balance and we've shown you some ways to help get it back in balance.

- **Stop touching your face!**

Unless you washed them two minutes ago, your hands are dirty, germ, greasy and pretty disgusting.

- **Do not squeeze or pick your spots!**

We know it's tempting, but you know what? It won't make your spot go quicker. It will damage and irritate your skin, spread bacteria to other parts of your face and up the chances of scarring

- **Use a spot zapper (ideally our Super Balm).**

Apply it with clean hands, every few hours, and believe me, your spot will disappear in a couple of days (if not overnight).

- **Humidity and sweating are not your skin's friends.**

Try not to sit around too long with a sweaty face or in sweaty sports kit. Splash your skin with water after sport, shower if you can and remember to cleanse along your (usually sweaty) hairline.

- **Clean your phone (and, ideally your keyboard)**

with an anti-bacterial wipe every couple of days. They are second only to your hands in germ, disgustingness.

Okay, I think that's it!

I know that this is a LOT of information to take in and I'm not expecting you to remember everything I've said. So keep this and come back to it from time to time (look at it as a skincare crib sheet!).

The important thing to remember is that, while getting some spots is kind of inevitable when you are a teen, you don't have to suffer being very spotty all the time. There is a lot you can do to help: eat healthily, keep calm and happy, use good products daily. If you treat your skin the right way, it will be happy. And, so will you! This is me, your substitute parent/friend/skincare expert signing off!

Love,



Charlotte-Anne XOXO

P.S If you've loved this and want to know more (here's hoping!), you can find it in our Skin School and in the emails we'll send to your parents. Or just email me your questions on team@spots-and-stripes.com

P.P.S If you REALLY loved it and want to become a subscriber, [click here!](#)