



Skin Care | Adult Acne

Dermatologists Warn That This Popular Drink Could Be Messing Up Your Skin

Liz Ritter , Executive Managing Editor | May 15, 2017



If **protein shakes** are a big part of your workout life, you may want to consider what derms say they could potentially be doing to your skin. “We constantly see patients who are using protein mixtures and end up with severe **acne**,” says Omaha, NE, dermatologist **Joel Schlessinger, MD**. “This is most likely due to substances that act as hormonal boosters or actual hormones in the products. The same hormones that help **stimulate muscle growth** also stimulate sebum production. While these drinks and supplements may help build muscle mass, they can also lead to major acne breakouts.”

As Paramus, NJ, dermatologist **Rebecca Baxt, MD**, stresses, these mixtures also have another major drawback: “These drinks are usually processed chemicals in a powder form. **Processed foods** have many preservatives and chemicals that are not natural or **healthy** for the body.”

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Dr. Schlessinger does admit there is very little clinical research on the link between protein drinks and acne breakouts, but says initial studies suggest that whey could be to blame.

"Whey proteins, the stuff in protein drinks, are what is left over after the fat is skimmed off. It is thought that the whey encourages the production of a peptide in the gut that then stimulates production of the hormone insulin and insulin is known to influence sebum production. While more studies have to be conducted, existing studies coupled with anecdotal evidence is enough for us to recommend patients remove whey from their diet," says New York dermatologist Dendy Engelman, MD, who recommends that if you absolutely have to have that protein shake, use plant-based powders.

"If you want to eat protein, eat natural protein! Natural or organic chicken or turkey or fish, or beans or tofu," Dr. Baxt recommends. "There are so many protein sources; we don't need a can of processed powder mixed with water."

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