

Example: Briefing

Keyword: <acne stress>

Subject: <Symptoms>

Subsection: <stress>

<briefing title="The Effect of Stress on Acne" rid="487849" keyword="acne stress" subject="Symptoms" subsection="stress">

<intro>

Acne is caused by a number of factors. In fact, it's still unclear just how many factors can contribute to the condition. Doctors and researchers alike have long suspected that stress is one of those factors. Until recent years, though, there wasn't much evidence to support that claim. In the early 2000s, the link between **acne and stress** started to become more clear.

<question title="How was the connection between **acne and stress** made?" order="1">

Stanford University conducted a study in 2003. The study found that college students were more prone to breakouts during exams. During non-exam periods, the condition eased. Exams are a highly stressful time, at least compared to non-exam periods. The conclusion reached was that the severity of acne breakouts corresponded to stress levels.

<question title="How strong is the link?" order="2">

The exact cause of acne in relation to stress is still unknown. What researchers do know is pimples are formed when bacteria clog the hair follicles. Certain cells which produce sebum have receptors for stress hormones. The mixture that results when sebum comes in contact with dead skin cells is typically what clogs the pores. When stressed, more sebum is produced, allowing for more clogging of the pores.

<question title="Is the link direct?" order="3">

There may not be a direct link. That is, there might be a third element that's caused by stress that, in turn, causes acne. Some studies have shown the same link between acne and stress as the Stanford study. Many of those same studies, though, showed no direct link between psychological stress and breakouts. Many researchers have concluded that **acne and stress** are not the only pieces of the puzzle.

<question title="What are other possible factors?" order="4">

The most obvious link is the acne sufferer himself. When people are stressed, they tend to pick at their skin. Picking at blemishes can make the problem much worse. This condition is known as excoricee. Mild problems with acne can become much more serious cases of scarring.

<question title="Does stress treatment equal acne treatment?" order="5">

Treating stress is great for overall health. It won't, however, directly contribute to lessening the problem of acne. It can help as part of a larger treatment plan. Since there is still no direct link between the two, however, it's unlikely that simply decreasing stress will decrease breakouts. A more thorough plan is necessary.

<conclusion>

Much more research is needed to verify the link between **acne and stress**. Because the link exists in the first place, it can be helpful to decrease stress levels as part of a more

comprehensive approach. Since unknown factors still exist, though, it's necessary to take other precautions. The most definitive conclusion from recent research is the dramatically negative effect that picking at skin has on breakouts overall.

<callout class="tip">

In certain cases, what can seem like acne could in fact be a hormonal condition. Often, an excess of testosterone leads to excess oil production. If you suspect a more severe underlying cause, consult a dermatologist.