

Larchmont Chronicle

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Q: I had no idea I'd still be breaking out at my age. What's going on?

"You're not alone," says Dr. Rebecca Fitzgerald. "Women come in to my office saying, 'Can you believe it?' Pimples AND wrinkles?' Yes, I can." While men get hit with acne in adolescence, women experience it a year before menstruation begins until a few years after, she explains. Potentially, we're talking about from 10 until 50 years old.

"Pimples are just as unpleasant at 50 as they are at 15, and of course it seems more unfair to have pimples *and* wrinkles," she empathizes.

Here's what's happening: skin's upper protective layer, the stratum corneum, helps inhibit water loss and contains pigment to protect from the sun. But these **protective skin cells can clog pores because of hormonal influences.**

However, there's is a **lot that can be done** to clear up aging skin. Dr. Fitzgerald's **first approach** includes

- retinols (such as Retin-A)
- chemical peels and
- a micro-massage cleansing brush, Clarisonic Pro (available for home use).

The goal is to keep oil in check and skin exfoliated to dodge clogged pores.

Her next recommendations? Treatment with antibiotics will reduce both bacteria and inflammation. For more persistent flare ups, she recommends oral contraceptives to control hormonal fluctuations. And for extreme cases, such as a 40-year-old patient with cystic acne, she suggests Accutane to exfoliate, and reduce oil, bacteria and inflammation.

Dr. Fitzgerald points out an **unexpected benefit to acne treatment**, "Healthy exfoliated skin glows and looks younger."