

Should you be using salicylic acid for acne? Derms weigh in

Plus, eight products that could change your skin for the better.



What does salicylic acid do?

According to [Dr. Neda Mehr](#), a board-certified dermatologist in Newport Beach, California, salicylic acid breaks down the “glue” that holds skin cells together. “By dissolving the protein that holds the sticky skin cells together, salicylic acid helps unclog pores, [making it] an excellent option for acne [and] clogged pores from whiteheads or blackheads,” she explained. By breaking down that skin “glue,” salicylic acid allows the skin to be exfoliated away easier and helps other products penetrate deeper into the skin, “instead of sitting on top of a cellophane-like layer of clogged skin cells,” she said.

“Although salicylic acid preparations come in many different forms, including creams, gels, lotions, pads, plasters, shampoos, cleansers and topical peeling solutions, my favorite form is with pads,” Mehr said. “These pads promote skin renewal while helping heal current blemishes and prevent future breakouts.” Made of equal parts glycolic and salicylic acid, these pads gently exfoliate the skin to help prevent future breakouts and diminish acne-causing impurities.