



[Authoritative facts](#) about the skin from the [New Zealand Dermatological Society Incorporated](#).

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Acne due to medicines

Acne can occasionally be caused by, or aggravated by, medications (drugs).

Hormones

A number of [hormone](#) medications may be responsible:

- [Oral steroids](#) may cause [steroid acne](#).
- Contraceptive agents: medroxyprogesterone injection (Depo-Provera) and oral contraceptives which reduce circulating sex hormone binding globulin (SHBG), can aggravate acne in females.
- Testosterone
- Anabolic steroids such as danazol, stanozolol can cause severe acne including [acne conglobata](#) and [acne fulminans](#).

Athletes and body-builders sometimes abuse anabolic steroids because they result in increased muscle bulk – severe acne is one of the undesirable results.

Other medication

It is not known why some other medicines cause or aggravate acne; theories include effects on white blood cells and direct effects on the hair follicle.

Medications known to aggravate acne include:

- Halogens (iodides, chlorides, bromides, halothane)
- Antiepileptics (carbamazepine, phenytoin, phenobarbital)
- Antituberculous drugs (ethionamide, isoniazid, [rifampicin](#))
- Antidepressants (lithium, amoxapine)
- [Ciclosporin](#)
- B vitamins (B12, cyanocobalamin)

Related information

On DermNet NZ:

- [Acne](#)

Other websites:

- [Acneiform Eruptions](#)

Books about skin diseases:

See the [DermNet NZ bookstore](#)

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DermNet does not provide an on-line consultation service.

If you have any concerns with your skin or its treatment, see a [dermatologist](#) for advice.

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