

KISS: Acne Vulgaris

Key learning points from [Lancet Infectious Diseases 2016](#) and [BJGP 2018](#):

- Antibiotic resistance is increasing - use non-antibiotic topical preparations (benzoyl peroxide (BP) and/or retinoids) in preference to topical antibiotics as first line treatment
- If using oral antibiotics, limit use to 3 months and always use topical BP +/- retinoid as well

Based on [Primary Care Dermatology Society Oct 2017](#); [click here for management summary](#)

	Mild	Moderate	Severe
Description click here for images	<i>Comedonal acne - open comedones (blackheads) and closed comedones (whiteheads)</i>	<i>Papules and pustules and may be more widespread distribution</i>	<i>More severe and widespread papules/pustules; may have nodules or cysts; scarring or hyperpigmentation may be present</i>
First line Give info, including on skin-care Click here for patient information	<p>① Topical retinoid +/- benzoyl peroxide 2.5% (BP); options include:</p> <p>⇒ Adapalene</p> <p>⇒ Adapalene combined with BP 2.5%</p> <p>⇒ Isotretinoin</p> <p>Avoid topical retinoids in pregnancy</p>	<p>Combination topical agent:</p> <p>① Adapalene + BP 2.5%</p> <p>② Clindamycin + BP</p> <p>③ Clindamycin + tretinoin or erythromycin combination</p> <p>⇒ Consider a COCP in women</p> <p>If more widespread OR not responding to above treatments switch to oral antibiotics below WITH topical BP +/- retinoid</p>	<p>REFER all for specialist assessment and consideration of oral isotretinoin</p> <p>In meantime, commence treatment with oral antibiotic and BP + topical retinoid</p> <p>Consider a COCP in women</p>
Second line	⇒ azelaic acid	<p>CONTINUE topical BP +/- retinoid and add antibiotic (Do NOT use topical and oral antibiotics together):</p> <p>① Tetracycline - start with lymecycline 408mg OD but switch to doxycycline 100mg OD if not improving at 6 weeks</p> <p>② Macrolide is an option but high resistance so usually reserve for <12s and pregnancy</p> <p>③ Trimethoprim - reserve for children who don't tolerate macrolide</p>	

Refer anyone with: Severe acne; scarring or hyperpigmentation (more common in brown/black skin); moderate acne not responding to 2 different types of antibiotic; severe psychological distress