



back chat

Trouble with “bacne”? Winter is the perfect time to tame this hard-to-reach skin concern, says *Stephanie Darling*.

Let's start at the beginning. What actually causes acne? Skin produces sebum that comes from glands connected to your hair follicles. The sebum travels up the follicles to add moisture to your skin and hair. Acne forms when extra sebum and dead skin cells build up at the base of the follicle. This build-up clogs the pores and traps bacteria, causing the follicle to swell, which leads to pimples and blackheads.

Dermatologist Dr Ritu Gupta says acne can flare up on the face, chest and back and is caused by four main things: “Family history; a hormonal surge of oestrogen and progesterone; bacteria that lives in the oil glands and which can stimulate the body to react against it; and when the lining around the hair follicle forms comedones [bumps on the skin].”

Parts of the back are difficult to reach, which makes them a cleansing and treatment nightmare, and a breeding ground for pimples,

blackheads and whiteheads. The skin's pores get clogged as a result of sweating, hormonal fluctuations, skin rubbing against clothes and stress. To help tackle this cluster, try showering with a body wash that contains salicylic acid, like Paula's Choice Weightless Body Treatment (\$50), and use a handy back-exfoliating tool like Manicare Exfoliating Back Scrubber (\$17) – it has stretch fabric and handles, which helps with those hard-to-reach areas.

Back sprays are a great addition to your bodycare collection as they contain active ingredients, such as tea-tree oil and salicylic acid, and come with nozzles that swivel to reach difficult spots. Try Murad Clarifying Body Spray (\$74). If the body wash and sprays aren't shifting the acne, ask your GP for a prescription for a peroxide-foam treatment, which kills inflammation-causing bacteria. If this doesn't do the trick, it might be time to seek advice from a dermatologist.

Even if you don't suffer from bacne, a back facial is a treat. Therapists generally start with a thorough scrub to clear clogged pores, a deep cleanse and condition, plus extractions. In Melbourne, try the Artemis Medispa B-Acne Facial (\$199), which includes deep cleansing, exfoliation, steam and extraction, a purifying mask, and massage with a rich moisturiser.

Once your back is a clean slate, it's time for some dedicated care, starting with a perfectly applied fake tan. For a professional application, try Tan Temple in Sydney and Beauty & Bronze in Melbourne. For DIY, try Bondi Sands One Hour Express Foam (\$19). As with all fake tanning, preparation is key, so exfoliate well before application. To apply the mousse at home, invest in Loving Tan Easy To Reach Back Applicator (\$25), and to extend the life of your fake tan, apply moisturising Spray Aus Tan Extender (\$30) before bed each night.



ask STEPH

How do I get rid of flyaway hair after blow-drying?

Try using a smoothing cream, anti-humidity spray or a lightweight serum to seal the cuticle. You can also use a leave-in conditioner or hair oil for added moisture and shine. We love ColorWow Dream Coat Supernatural Spray, \$58.

Send questions via Instagram, @mrssdarling.

the LOVE list



Winter make-up is all about rich contours and a palette of peaches and cream finished with a vibrant brick-red on lips.

Rare Beauty Soft Pinch Liquid Contour in Gentle, \$50. Hourglass Unreal Liquid Blush in Scene, \$63. Milani Baked Powder Blush in Berry Amore, \$22.