



Lifecycle of a Zit

Acne begins forming under the surface long before you see it—three to six weeks, in fact. It starts when skin cells accumulate and become trapped inside your pores, blocking normal oil output. These clogs create the ideal environment for *Propionibacterium acnes* (*P. acnes*) to thrive and multiply—as the bacteria grow, they cause inflamed spots that eventually rupture (ouch!).

Here's the story of how a spot is born. Scroll through the illustrations for the full timeline.