Q: I have facial acne. What can I do?

A:

- Clean your skin gently with a mild cleanser such as Cetaphil Liquid Facial cleanser. Scrubbing too hard can make it worse. Wash morning and evening and after strenuous exercise.
- Wash your hair regularly (every day if you have oily hair or breakouts near the scalp)
- Shave carefully. Make sure the blade is sharp and soften the beard area completely with cleanser and warm water before applying shaving cream.
- Select cosmetics and skin care products which are labeled oil free and “non-comedogenic” (doesn’t clog pores).

Treatments which do not require a prescription may be available in bar form, liquid washes, gels and lotion at the store. Follow the directions on the package. Use regularly but not more than twice a day. If irritation occurs, reduce how frequently you use it. It can take as long as 6 to 8 weeks to see noticeable improvement.

- Benzoyl peroxide which destroys the bacteria which contribute to acne also may help reduce oil on the skin.
- Resorcinol helps break down whiteheads and blackheads.
- Salicylic Acid also helps break down whiteheads and blackheads and decreases shedding of cells that line the hair follicles.
- Tea tree oil may have some antibacterial properties.

If these measures fail there are prescriptive alternatives available. You would have to see your primary health care provider for this. If you have severe nodular or cystic acne it would be best to see a dermatologist.