

# ‘How I finally beat acne in time for my wedding’

The *Bill* actress Lucy Speed recalls her battle with spots

**L**ooking at Lucy Speed’s skin today, it’s hard to imagine it as anything less than flawless. But the 34-year-old spent her 20s and early 30s plagued by severe acne. “I’d gone from having clear skin in my teens, to being covered in spots,” the actress recalls.

Not only did her problem skin make her self-conscious about appearing on-screen, but it also threatened to overshadow her wedding. Thankfully, however, she found her skin solution in time for the big day.

### Expensive skin quest

After being diagnosed with polycystic ovary syndrome – a common hormonal condition, which can trigger acne – Lucy’s doctor put her on the Pill. This helped initially, but the spots later returned. She then embarked on an expensive quest to clear her skin.

“I tried everything from creams to micro-dermabrasion, lasers, light therapy and colonic irrigation. Nothing worked.” At the same time, Lucy’s profile as



Medication and facials helped Lucy

**I was terrified the spots would reappear just before my wedding**

an actress was on the rise as she landed roles in *EastEnders* and *The Bill* – creating more anxiety. “I was constantly worried you could see my spots on screen.”

She loathed sitting in the make-up artist’s chair. “My skin was always the topic of conversation and I ended up becoming quite withdrawn.”

News that *The Bill* was to begin filming in HD (high-definition television, which creates clearer, sharper images)

caused further panic but ultimately led to Lucy finding her solution. “I’d heard that HD showed up every pore, and I freaked out. I confided in my co-star, Lisa Maxwell, who recommended London’s Harley Street Skin Clinic.”

### Taking expert advice

Lucy took Lisa’s advice, and met skin specialists Dr Aamer Khan and Lesley Reynolds



Troubled by spots

»BEFORE



A clear complexion for the big day

Khan (*Best*’s beauty expert), who prescribed a short course of medication, plus weekly facials and a skincare regimen.

“I saw a difference almost immediately, and was spot-free in six months,” she says.

“I was terrified they would

reappear just before my wedding, but my skin was totally clear. That’s when I knew it was under control.”

Her experiences have made her determined to help other acne sufferers and she has begun working with the Acne Academy ([www.acneacademy.org](http://www.acneacademy.org)).

“You don’t need to put up acne,” she insists. “Visit your GP and be persistent; there’s a solution for everyone.”



A role in *The Bill* put Lucy’s skin on show

»TURN OVER FOR MORE SPOT-FIGHTING TIPS



# Acne: Got a teenager with problem skin or suffering from spots yourself? Read on... what you can do

**Best's beauty expert Lesley Reynolds Khan answers your questions**

**Q** What's the difference between acne and spots?

**A** Anyone can get the odd spot, but people with acne have spots most of the time.

**Q** What is the cause of acne in teenagers?

**A** During puberty, adolescents start to produce more of the male hormone testosterone. This increases oil, which can clog pores, allowing bacteria to breed.

**Q** But why am I still suffering as an adult?

**A** Adults, particularly women, can also suffer from acne. It's often triggered by stress, pregnancy or polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) – a common hormonal condition – or sensitivity to male hormones.

## WHAT CAN MY DOCTOR DO?

Your GP can prescribe treatments, or may refer you to a dermatologist. Treatments include lotions, antibiotics, the Pill or Roaccutane. This is an effective drug, but can have serious side effects so, in my view, should be a last resort.



Avoid fiddling with spot-prone skin

**Hands off!**

Squeezing spots forces infection deeper into the skin, causing more inflammation.

**Q** What skincare can help beat the condition?

**A** Choose a mild cleanser, an exfoliating serum – look for one containing glycolic acid, which dissolves the dead skin

cells that can block pores – and apply a light moisturiser.

**Q** Could I have polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS)?

**A** Alongside acne, PCOS symptoms include irregular periods, weight gain and excess facial hair growth. If you have any of these, tell your GP. PCOS is diagnosed with blood tests and an ultrasound scan.

Limiting wheat and dairy could help your skin



## WHAT EFFECT DOES DIET HAVE?

A poor diet alone will not cause acne, but some people find certain foods, such as wheat and dairy, can make spots worse. You could try cutting out these foods for a few weeks to see if it makes a difference.

**Q** Can make-up make my acne worse?

**A** Some cosmetics, especially heavy liquid formulations, can be pore-clogging. Go for a mineral powder make-up instead.

» Lesley is an anti-ageing expert for the Harley Street Skin Clinic ([www.harleystreetskinclinic.com](http://www.harleystreetskinclinic.com))

» If you have a burning beauty question you need answered, email [asklesley@natmags.co.uk](mailto:asklesley@natmags.co.uk)

## » YOUR ACNE-FIGHTING ESSENTIALS Best's favourite good-skin buys

### »CLEANSE

Choose a mild wash-off cleanser that won't aggravate your acne. Remove with warm water and a clean cloth to help ease away dead cells.

Cetaphil Gentle Skin Cleanser, **£9.18**



### »EXFOLIATE

Exfoliating serums keep pores clear to prevent the growth of bacteria. Apply under your moisturiser. And for extra sloughing, use a gentle scrub once a week.

Harley Street Skin Glyco Serum, **£20.95**



### »MOISTURISE

Opt for an unscented, ultra-light lotion.

Cetaphil Moisturizing Lotion, **£9.18**



### »TREAT

Emergency breakouts call for a treatment with anti-inflammatory ingredients, pore-cleansing salicylic acid or benzoyl peroxide, which kills bacteria.

Frederm Gel, **£5.10**



### »PERFECT

Mineral powder make-up won't clog pores.

bareMinerals Matte SPF 15 foundation, **£25**

