

**allure****Azelaic Acid Is Reddit's Secret Ingredient to Fighting Acne**

BY DEVON ABELMAN | JUNE 9, 2017



Real recognize real — Sarah Kinonen, *Allure's* associate digital beauty editor, and I enjoy perusing the Skincare Addiction subreddit. While Sarah lives for the skin-care horror stories and disproving hacks, I love discovering new ingredients and products that might help clear my skin. In fact, this subreddit alone has convinced me to start using more serums from Drunk Elephant and The Ordinary and stick hydrocolloid bandages all over my face. Recently, I've noticed an uptick in posts raving about the wonders of azelaic acid. Some consider it their "holy grail" ingredient. A Redditor who goes by RaspberryChocolate recently claimed it cleared up her acne in three days. She started using it on a Saturday, and by Monday, she said, "I had no active pimples on my face, something that hasn't happened to me for about three years. I have also never had pimples clear up that fast without extracting, even with benzoyl peroxide."

Wow.

Of all the acids that have been on my radar during my years as a beauty editor — like salicylic, glycolic, and hyaluronic — I've never heard of azelaic acid. With my curiosity piqued, I asked a couple dermatologists to educate me in the ways of azelaic acid.

**First of all, what exactly is azelaic acid?**

Well, its origins aren't much different than your last avocado toast or glass of beer. "Azelaic acid is a naturally occurring acid that comes from barley, rye grains, and wheat," explains Debra Jaliman, a board-certified dermatologist in New York City and assistant professor of

dermatology at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. To get even more specific, azelaic acid is a part of the family of dicarboxylic acids, which also includes even lesser-known adipic acid and sebacic acid. Because of this, it has "antibacterial, keratolytic, comedolytic and antioxidant activity," **Ava Shamban**, a Beverly Hills-based dermatologist, tells *Allure*.

### **How does it help fight acne?**

"Azelaic acid has been shown to be bactericidal against p. Acnes, the bacteria on the skin that is one of the causes of acne," Shamban says. She compares its effectiveness to that of benzoyl peroxide. In addition to killing bacteria, it has one major factor in common with some acids that might already be in your skin care routine like alpha hydroxy acid and beta hydroxy acid.

"Azelaic acid helps loosen skin cells so they don't clog pores and reduce inflammation often seen in acne," she adds. In addition to acne, the acid can also be helpful for evening out skin tone, Shamban notes. This is helpful for those who are left with brown spots after calming down break outs.

### **When should azelaic acid be applied?**

Day, night, or both. Jaliman and Shamban agree you can use it either time of day. If you end up using it at night, Jaliman says you don't have to worry about layering it with anything else. However, Shamban adds, "It's a great product to use in combination with other acne medicines or alone." For A.M. use, definitely slather on some SPF to protect your skin from damaging. A lightweight moisturizer can be helpful too, as some formulations can be drying.

### **How fast does it work?**

You should see "some improvement after a week," Shamban says. After a full month, you'll truly see if it works for you.

OK, I'm ready to try it for myself now. Excuse me while I add The Ordinary Azelaic Acid Suspension 10% to my cart.

<http://www.allure.com/story/what-is-azelaic-acid>