



## **Pimples - What is a pimple?**

### **Fact**

- Pimples are a combination of dead skin cells, sebum (oil) and bacteria.
- A pimple begins when a hair follicle in your skin gets blocked and the sebum can't escape out to the surface of your skin.
- Dead skin cells soak up the oil and bacteria eat the oily dead skin cells.
- Bacteria eat and poop and eat and poop and they make a real mess.
- White blood cells in your blood arrive to clean up the mess and white pus builds up. That makes a "white head" pimple under your skin.

### **Do you know**

- Your skin is covered by millions of bacteria. Some of it is bad but some of it helps keep you healthy!
- On some parts of your face you have more than 300 sebum glands in the space of your big toe nail.
- Just about everyone gets pimples at one stage of their life or another.
- Teenagers can get a lot of pimples because their bodies are growing and changing and can produce more sebum oil than normal.
- You can get pimples all over your body. Your face, neck, chest, back, even your bottom.

### **Experiments you can do**

Have a look at the skin on your face in the mirror. If you ask a grown up nicely and explain what you're doing you might get to have a look at the skin on their face. It's easier to see the pores in an adults skin but you might be able to see them in yours – they're like tiny little holes in your skin that release the oil called sebum. Around the nose is a good place to see them. On an adult you might find some filled with a blackish brown stuff. Those are called black heads and it's the dust, dirt and grime of the day mixing with the oil and dead skin cells. Nearly everyone has them.

### **Other Investigations**

At the end of the day use a little piece of sticky tape to have a look at dead skin cells and the oil in your skin. Stick a small piece of sticky tape onto the skin on your hand or arm, then gently lift it off again. Stuck to the tape will be dead skin cells, maybe some dirt, maybe a hair or two (ouch!) and some sebum. If you're hot and sweaty the sticky tape might not stick too well but have a close look and see what you can see.

### **Jokes**

What did one pimple say to the other pimple?

Oh, come on... give me a squeeze