

Teenagers are often fooled into thinking pimples will miraculously disappear when they're old enough to pass their driving test. Not true: many of us find spotty chins a grim reality well into our thirties. Whiteheads and blackheads become a particular problem during Dubai's sweltering summers, so we spoke to Dr Maria Anglo Khattar, a research scientist from Dubai's Aesthetica Clinic and fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine in the UK, to find out why we get spots and how to stop them.

### **What causes pimples?**

'Although people often believe that sweet foods are a contributing factor, there is no direct proof of this, although there is evidence that dairy products such as milk help to trigger the condition. Acne is caused by over-activity of the sebaceous glands, which become enlarged and produce more sebum (oil). This sebum, which normally drains to the surface, blocks the pores and bacteria begin to grow, causing pustules.'

### **Why are they worse in summer?**

'In the heat, sebum production in acne-prone individuals increases. Sweating, dust and heat all contribute to blocked pores, leading to the growth of bacteria and the development of acne.'

### **How to combat them**

'Acne is a chronic condition for which there is no definitive cure,' explains Dr Khattar. 'It's a matter of control and maintenance.' Her top tips for combating pimples are:

- 'A diligent cleansing routine in the morning and evening. However, over-cleansing will cause over-stimulation, so take care'
- 'Taking vitamin C can help to reduce proliferation of the bacteria that cause acne.'
- 'Take an antibiotic as prescribed by your doctor.'

- 'Use derma-cosmetic products with alpha hydroxy and retinoic acids. These exfoliate the skin, removing dead skin cells and therefore reducing blockage.'
- 'Taking zinc supplements discourages acne-producing bacteria and decreases production of sebum from sebaceous glands.'