

Nadine Ismiel's Story

My daily fight against acne began when I was just 12 years old. During of my grade 6 class, pimples started appearing on my forehead and soon spread to my chin. At such a young age I was one of the first to start suffering from acne, and I hated living with a complexion that seemed to have changed overnight.

As the years went by, my acne problem progressively got worse. I didn't want to leave the house and if I did, I would smother my face with foundation and concealer to try to hide my blemishes, which by this time was quite serious on my cheeks and jaw line.

I became very self-conscious and really felt like the first thing anybody noticed about me was the acne. I wanted to feel beautiful but every time I looked in the mirror all I could see was a face full of pimples...Whenever I experienced an acne flare-up, I would make excuses to avoid going out with my friends. No matter how much effort I put into my appearance (clothes, hair, makeup etc...), I was never happy with the way I looked.

Like millions of other kids around the world, I tried the supermarket acne products but they never seemed to work. After 4 years of trying all the supermarket acne treatments, I decided it was time to see a doctor to find an effective acne solution.

My doctor did have options and I tried them all. Prescription creams, lotions and tablets... plenty of them! You name it, I tried it, but nothing seemed to work.

Six years after I first started to have problems, my doctor finally referred me to a dermatologist. By this time I was about to start university and was increasingly desperate. At 19, it felt like I'd had more than my fair share of acne, but there seemed to be no let-up. I really began to give up hope that my acne was ever going to go away...

The dermatologist started by prescribing a topical retinoid treatment. This caused severe drying and irritation – I could actually feel it burning away my skin at times. Unsurprisingly, my face became very sensitive, especially to sunlight – not what a teenage girl who loved spending time with her friends at the beach needed!

Next, the dermatologist recommended another prescription acne treatment, one that was in capsule dosage form. This medication was the “gold-standard” in acne treatments - and was supposed to be a one-off effective treatment with a low failure rate. I was cautious about trying this medication as I had read about it having some serious potential side effects. My mother was also reluctant to let me try it – in fact she'd stopped me from starting on it during my HSC, afraid that it would have an impact on my results. In retrospect she may well have been right, because the impact was far more severe than I'd ever imagined. But, at the time, I was so embarrassed about my acne that I was willing to do whatever it took to solve the problem.

It may sound dramatic, but almost as soon as I swallowed the first capsule I started to feel the first side-effects. My lips became dry, and within a few days they and my face lost all moisture, splitting and flaking to the point where they bled. Imagine cracking a smile – and cracking your face at the same time. But it didn't stop at my skin. I started to get frequent eye infections and nose bleeds, and had to have regular blood tests to make sure my liver was still functioning properly. Internally things were going wrong too. I started to suffer from really sore muscles and joints and, worst of all, extremely painful ingrown toe nails! Even having a light covering of bed clothes was painful on my feet – and walking a nightmare: not ideal when you have to move from class to class on a large university campus.

Looking back it seems a ridiculous ordeal to go through, but the point was my skin did improve considerably. When you've had acne for years, you'll do almost anything to get over it. I completed my six month course of the dermatologist-prescribed medication, and hoped that was it. Unfortunately, it wasn't...

About one month after I completed the course, my acne came back with a vengeance. I was horrified. My acne was now worse than ever.

My dermatologist told me that I was part of the small percentage of people that would require a second course of the medication. I felt like I had no other choice but to agree and endure the pain and agony of the side effects again.

Unfortunately, when I finished the second course, my acne came back worse than ever. I was devastated and my dermatologist was out of ideas...

Looking back, this was actually a blessing in disguise because although I didn't realise it at the time, this is when I would start my personal journey to research and develop a natural acne treatment that would actually work. I guess you could say this was the very beginnings of what would later become PuraSkin Total Acne Solution.

With my acne still a severe problem, I was a woman on a mission – determined to find a solution. I studied Biomedical Science at the University of Technology, Sydney and then began working as a formulations chemist in the cosmetic and therapeutic medicines industry.

It was during this time that I discovered a clinical paper that showed topical Vitamin B3 to be as effective as a topical prescription lotion for the treatment of acne. From a scientific view the paper was interesting – from a personal perspective it was captivating!

I couldn't ignore the potential of the study, so with the help of a senior chemist (my mentor at the time), I started experimenting in my laboratory with formulating a Vitamin B3 enriched gel. There I discovered first hand the trials and tribulations of becoming an inventor. We couldn't get the gel formula to stay stable, which meant the solution kept breaking down after a couple of weeks. We persisted for many months, however it was clear that the process was going to be more challenging than we originally expected.

I decided to conduct some further research into gel formulation techniques with Vitamin B3, in the hope of coming across some helpful tips. It was at this stage that I was lucky enough to have a Eureka moment...

I came across an expired Australian patent for a topical gel for the treatment of acne comprising of Vitamin B3 and Tea Tree oil. Most surprising of all was the inventor's name: a research pharmacist that I worked for during my final year at university! I immediately contacted him and we spent the next few months exploring potential formulation options. In particular, he encouraged me to replace Tea Tree oil with Australian Sandalwood oil, as he believed it would be more effective at reducing acne. Further research showed that Australian Sandalwood oil could be an effective way to prevent the growth of acne causing bacteria, and I immediately decided to add this ingredient into the formulation.

By August 2004, the first sample of PuraSkin Acne Clearing Gel was ready. With no better guinea pig than myself, in the interest of science I tested PuraSkin Acne Clearing Gel on my own face. On the right side, I used PuraSkin gel and the left I used a 10% benzoyl peroxide cream. The results were amazing. PuraSkin Acne Clearing Gel delivered the same acne reducing results as the harsh benzoyl peroxide cream but without any of the redness, dryness and irritation! This was the first step in finding an acne treatment that really worked.

That same year, I enrolled in a Master of Herbal Medicines at the University of Sydney. During my studies I came to realise that if I wanted to treat acne effectively I would need to develop a total acne solution – one that would utilise PuraSkin Acne Clearing Gel and work synergistically to address the internal body mechanisms that could assist in promoting healthy skin externally. In other words, I started looking at oral supplement options.

For the next 12 months I visited many naturopaths and Chinese Herbal Medicine practitioners to explore which ingredients might help reduce acne. I trialled and tested many formulas and remedies, but I did not experience any significant benefits that I hadn't got from just using the PuraSkin Acne Clearing Gel alone.

As my studies progressed, I conducted my own research into individual natural ingredients, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants and their affects on skin. With the information I gathered, I started consuming the individual ingredients based on the research findings. Again, I used myself as a human guinea pig, trying various combinations of ingredients in tablet, capsule or liquid dosage form - up to 6 or 7 doses at a time!

In addition to my interest in developing an oral formula, I also felt that it was necessary to develop a facial cleanser because I found that the acne facial cleansers available in the supermarkets and pharmacies were either not affective or were overly drying on the skin.

As I began the process of using the 3 product systems together, I felt my skin starting to transform. My skin felt more hydrated, softer and smoother to touch. Within a few weeks, my acne had completely cleared! I felt like I had new skin! I could not remember the last time my complexion looked this good. It was such a wonderful feeling.

With the support of our family business, Sue Ismiel & Daughters (creators of the globally recognised Nad's brand), I was well on my way to establishing PuraSkin Total Acne Solution.