

**M. A. Khan, M.D.**  
Board Certified Dermatologist  
4761 Higbee Avenue N.W.  
Canton, Ohio 44718-2551  
Tel: 330-492-1117  
Fax: 330-244-9451

## **LARGE PORES**

by  
**Jerry Litt, M.D.**

Skin **pores** are the openings of hair follicles, oil glands, and sweat glands. Because they are inherited, you cannot change their size, no matter what the cosmetic firms tell you.

Show me a person who claims to have the “largest facial pores in the world,” and I will show you someone who owns at least one magnifying mirror!

It is true that certain conditions may make **pores** “appear” larger or smaller. Oily skin and severe acne, for example, may widen the oil ducts to create the “large pore” appearance. And **pores** may be more apparent on the nose, cheeks, and chin where there is the greatest concentration of oil glands. Repeated squeezing of blackheads and pimples may also lead to permanently widened **pores**, some of which may actually be tiny, pitted scars.

Other conditions can make your **pores** look smaller temporarily. For instance, note what happens to your **pores** when you acquire a sunburn. They become considerably smaller due to the inflammation and swelling around the **pores**. Once the inflammation has subsided, the **pores** will return to their original appearance. Pinching or gently slapping the skin of the cheeks to make them pink has a similar, temporary pore-shrinking effect.

There is *no* scientific evidence to support the fact that **pores** can be made to open and close, as many advertisements would lead you to believe. Certain astringents containing acetone and alcohol, as well as various facial masks, however, can produce a temporary “shrinking” effect. These products help remove excess oil from the skin surface that makes the skin feel cool and tight. A possible explanation of this phenomenon is that the astringent or mask acts as an irritant on the skin surface. This irritation causes swelling around the pore, thus making the opening appear smaller and shrunken. Any shrinkage, however, is so insignificant and so short-lived that the time, effort, and cost involved are usually not worth the outcome.

Similarly, hot baths, hot showers, and hot packs followed by cold baths, cold showers, and cold packs do absolutely nothing to the size of the **pores**. The only effect this “hot-cold” theory has is to make one feel that something — a tightening, a contraction, a shriveling, whatever — is actually going on in the **pores**. If, however, it makes you feel good — do it! It cannot do any harm.

For those of you who think your facial **pores** are the largest, the ugliest, and the most noticeable, do the following:

- v Wash your face thoroughly with soap and water three times a day
  - to prevent oils from accumulating, clogging up, and distending the **pores**.
- v Use a good, commercial astringent or face mask that makes you and your skin feel good.
- v Use only oil-free and water-based cosmetics and moisturizers.
- v And throw away your magnifying mirrors.

### **Dermatology Group Suggestions:**

"Big pores are like big feet - you are born with them and there's nothing you can do about them." Dr. Danby

**Permanent Cure:** Throw away the magnifying mirrors - Consensus recommendation.

### **Temporary Improvement**

- 1: Topical Retinoids to unclog the pores and make them less prominent (Retin-A, Differin etc)
- 2: Oral Retinoids to unclog the pores and make them less prominent (Accutane)
- 3: LaserGenesis (Cutera) - Nd:YAG Consult a Cosmetic Surgeon