

How to deal with porexia



Ellen Scott for Metro.co.uk Tuesday 15 Aug 2017 8:58 am



(Picture: Myles Goode)

Spent an hour this week staring into a magnifying mirror?

You, my friend, may be suffering from porexia.

That's the catchy term for an obsession with your pores.



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Porexia is all consuming. You obsess over your pores' size, imagining them to be much larger and more visible than they actually are, and will try anything to make them smaller in the pursuit of a poreless complexion.

As Beverly Cook explains [on the Dr Natasha Cook blog](#), porexia is a term that's been coined by dermatologists to mean an irrational fixation with pore size.

She writes: 'Do you spend a lot of time looking at your pores in a magnifying mirror? Are you fixated with shrinking them? If you answered yes to either of those questions, you may be suffering from porexia.'

Cook notes that porexia is a wide-spread issue. According to a 2014 study commissioned by L'Oreal Paris, 45% of women would want to change the size of their pores, and almost a third of those surveyed said they're more bothered by pore size than wrinkles.



(Picture: Ella Byworth for Metro.co.uk)

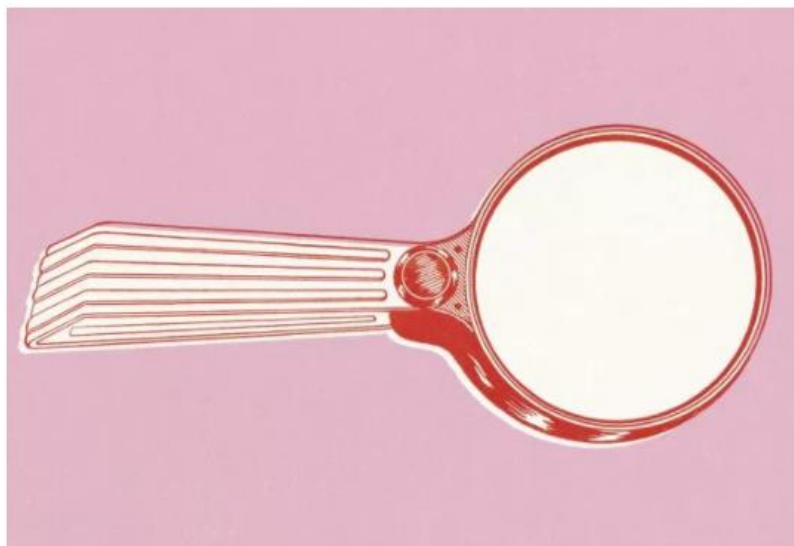
Add to that the way our hearts leap when we see a new product that claims to clear our pores on the market – whether that's a **black peel-off mask** or a **blackhead vacuum** – and it's clear we're truly obsessed.

So. What can you do if you've noticed a growing obsession with your own pores?

First off, get the facts on pore size – and realise that no miracle product will magically make your pores invisible.

As Rabbia Aslam, Clinical Director at HC MedSpa, explains to metro.co.uk, pore size is down to your genes – there's nothing you can do to shrink them down.

'We have around 5 million hair follicles (or, as they are more commonly referred to: pores) on the body, and hundreds of thousands of them are on the face,' Rabbia explains.



(Picture: Getty)

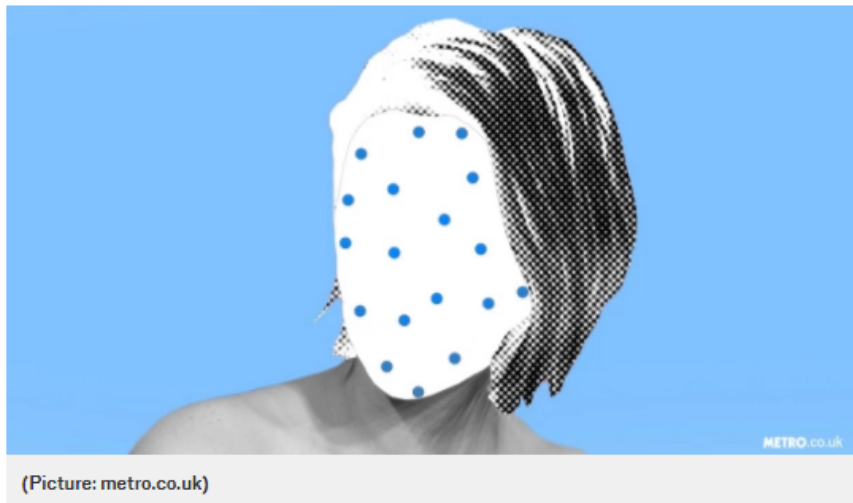
'Below the surface of the skin and attached to each pore is the sebaceous gland – this gland's function works by producing and releasing sebum in order to help protect and lubricate the surface of the skin.

'Pore size is, unfortunately, genetically determined. There's nothing you can do to shrink your pores.'

The reason we have larger pores in certain areas of our faces (oh hey, giant nose pores) is because of plugs and blockages, which cause pores to stretch out and enlarge.

This tends to happen in oilier parts of the face, where sebaceous glands are bigger, when the dead skin cells we shed every day mix with excess sebum and sit in the pore.

So while we can't make our pores smaller, we can work to prevent them from stretching out and getting any bigger – and we can do things to make them *appear* smaller.



The most important thing is to keep the skin clean and moisturised.

Cleanse every morning and evening to prevent blockages and get rid of any dirt or excess oil. Rabbia recommends a double cleanse routine (that just means washing your face twice each time) to first get rid of any surface makeup and dirt, then purify deeper into the pores.

'An exfoliator should be used one to two times weekly,' says Rabbia, warning against scrubs that strip the skin's natural oils (which triggers the sebaceous glands to overproduce the skin's natural oils to compensate).

'Opt for an AHA/BHA peel as opposed to a grain scrub, as these can be harsh on the skin.'

If you regularly notice blockages, such as blackheads and pimples, it's also worth looking for products containing salicylic acid, which boosts skin-cell turnover to prevent clogging, and receiving regular facial treatments so any blockages can be removed safely.

And moisturise. Definitely moisturise.



(Picture: Ella Byworth for Metro.co.uk)

But to be clear, that's pretty much all you can do to look after your pores.

Any other stuff is surface level, and may work to reduce the appearance of pores (such as primers and foundations), and that can be helpful. But we repeat, there is no way to shrink them down.

We'd urge anyone who thinks they're struggling with porexia to bin the magnifying mirror. Genuinely, get rid of it.

There's no need for you to know what your skin looks like that up close, and you'll only make your obsession spiral. Remember – no one else is seeing your pores to that level of detail (unless they have super vision). Use a regular mirror, and give yourself a limit on how long you can spend inspecting your skin in the mirror.