



# What is the difference between the effects of witchhazel, salicylic acid, and acetylsalicylic acid on the face?



February 22, 2012 7:28 PM [Subscribe](#)

What is the difference between the effects of witchhazel, salicylic acid, and acetylsalicylic acid on the face?

I ask specifically in relation to ingrown hairs

posted by [denverco](#) to [Health & Fitness](#) (5 answers total) 8 users marked this as a favorite

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I went to the Cosmetics Cop website for straight definitions:

**Acetylsalicylic acid**

**Salicylic acid**

**Witch hazel**

There were a few **articles** about ingrown hair, too.

posted by [hms71](#) at **8:06 PM** on February 22, 2012 [[1 favorite](#)]

Salicylic acid and acetylsalicylic acid are similar molecularly so there is said to be some overlap in function/properties.

Salicylic acid is mainly used as a chemical exfoliant, but it's said to have faint topical painkilling and anti-inflammatory properties.

Acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin) is mainly used as a painkiller and anti-inflammatory, but it's said to have some exfoliating properties.

posted by [needs more cowbell](#) at **8:43 PM** on February 22, 2012

Witchhazel - astringent, drying, pore closing. Smells pretty bad. Seemingly incompatible with my moisturizer. Anti-inflammatory (reduces redness). See below.

Salicylic acid - commercial anti-pimple stuff, promotes dead skin sloughing, opening clogged pores. A bit expensive to use to fight ingrowns, but for men's facial shaving... it's not unreasonable and can prevent ingrowns for people who are prone for them. I know people with whom this helps (mostly men with very curly facial hair or who had recently started shaving with a razor, as opposed to an electric).

Acetylsalicylic acid - aspirin. See below.

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I was recommended a recipe for homemade "Tend Skin:"

solution 1:

18 tablets uncoated aspirin, crushed in 5 oz. rubbing alcohol

solution 2:

8 tablets uncoated aspirin, crushed in 2.5 oz. witch hazel

Combine the two, mix well.

Personally, I've found that if there's cloudy stuff, it'll settle out if left alone for a day or so, you can decant the clear top portion to another bottle, otherwise, you might end up with white-ish-powdery-ish residue after you apply. I use disposable cotton pads from the pharmacy. 125 pads for, like, a buck. On sale.

You can also use coated aspirin; pound the heck out of the aspirin tablets in a mortar with a pestle, pick out the papery bits and/or run it through a kitchen mesh-sieve thinger and pick out the papery bits. I had a hard time finding un-coated aspirin.

ime, helps prevent the redness from shaving of legs, some, but as to actual ingrowns, meh. It's also kind of effective in staving off body acne. The isopropyl alcohol, in addition to the witchhazel, is rather drying. There's something in the witchhazel, though, which causes other stuff like moisturizers to not absorb well.

I've asked a couple of ask.me's about ingrowns and hair removal. Haven't found a homerun solution for me. Given that, instead, I've started at-home lasering, and am satisfied thus far (2.5 months into what should take 6+ months; similar timeframe as professional lasering at a fraction of the price) with the current 2012 version 3 Tria laser system.

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As for hyperpigmented spots where ingrowns were, see an immediate previous ask.me answer on mine promoting AHA/glycolic acid. I really think that it helps speed up the rate of depigmentation, and my recommended source is a lot less expensive than the stuff I've found at the pharmacy.

posted by [porpoise](#) at **9:28 PM** on February 22, 2012

*Witchhazel - astringent, drying, pore closing.*

**Pores can't open or close.**

posted by [Joseph Gurl](#) at **10:01 PM** on February 22, 2012 [[2 favorites](#)]

The answer also depends on what sort of witch hazel you're using. The less expensive stuff tends to have a much higher alcohol content, and is a lot more drying than the more expensive versions with less alcohol.

posted by [Corvid](#) at **12:34 PM** on February 23, 2012

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