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Does Popping a Blister Actually Make It Worse?



Read this before you attempt to break in that new pair of shoes.

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We've all been here before: You score a super cute new pair of shoes (on sale!). You spend the day breaking them in, and even though they're everything you wanted and more, you end up with one of life's most annoying non-serious afflictions: a [painful blister](#).

And, because it's so annoying and because you're human, you start to wonder about whether or not you should pop that blister. After all, it's tempting to take a needle to it and get it over with. But is that really the best thing for your skin?

Here, experts weigh in on blisters — and to pop, or not to pop — and offer their tips for helping them to heal quickly.

What Is a Blister?

Before we getting into the popping part, it's worth it for you to first understand exactly *what* a blister is.

"A blister is the skin's response to friction, inflammation, or trauma," says [Dr. Jeaneen Chappell](#), a dermatologist at [Platinum Dermatology Partners](#). "The most common blister is a friction blister which most people have experienced if they've ever worn ill-fitting shoes. Repetitive rubbing causes fluid and dead skin cells to collect below the layer of the skin called the stratum granulosum."

OK, So Should I Pop It?

No matter the expert you ask, the short answer is no.

The longer answer? Dr. [Ranella Hirsch](#), a Boston-based dermatologist explains that the roof of a blister — the fluid-filled part you *really* want to poke with a pin — acts as a natural bandage and is critical to helping the skin to heal.

"Usually, the fluid inside is sterile and once opened to the air, there becomes a substantial risk of infection," Hirsch says. "So please, no!"

Chappell agrees, adding: "The fluid will resolve and the overlying blister skin will peel off with time, as the body heals itself."

What If It Pops On Its Own?

OK, but there is, of course, always the chance that a blister could pop in its own, right? If that happens, then **Dr. Sheel Desai Solomon, a dermatologist and the founder of [Preston Dermatology and Skin Surgery](#)**, says you'll want to take certain measures to avoid infection.

"There isn't any need to rip the soft, wet skin that housed the blister bubble, and there is no need to compress the bubble to squeeze the liquid out," she says. "Just let it drain on its own and then wash gently with room temperature water and soap before applying a topical solution that prevents any infection from developing."

How Do I Treat a Blister?

If you're able to maintain a hands-off approach, then there are a few steps you can take to help a blister to heal. For starters, Solomon says you'll want to protect your blister from friction in order to avoid further irritation. Cover it with a bandage or a light layer of gauze that allows for some air to enter and help the blister dry out, she says. You also want to keep the area moisturized to help the healing process.

"A natural remedy that has become popular is using the natural gel of the aloe vera plant," she says. "If this is not accessible to you, a healing solution by popular skincare brands can help as well."

Try [Neosporin Original Antibiotic Ointment](#) (\$7) to also ward off infection-causing germs or [Band-Aid Hydro Seal Bandages](#) (\$2) that help to keep blisters from drying out.

How Do I Know If a Blister Is Infected?

Of course, even with the best precautions, a blister can end up infected. Chappell says if you notice redness that "extends well beyond the blister," thick yellow drainage, odor and/or warmth, then you could be dealing with an infected blister. If you suspect that's the case, then you'll want to see a healthcare professional.

But Chappell adds: "If the blister is left intact, the chances of infection are extremely low."

All the more reason to leave it alone, right?

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