

KERATOSIS PILARIS



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

A common skin disorder in which the openings of the hair follicles become filled with hard plugs. It usually involves the skin on the backs of upper arms, fronts of thighs, or buttocks. It may start in childhood, around age 2 or 3, affects many teenagers, and some adults.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Skin bumps that are small, firm, and skin-color or pink, or sometimes red. They have a dry "sandpaper" or "goosebumps" texture.
- They are located at the openings of hair follicles.
- The condition is usually worse in winter months when a person's skin is dryer.
- Bumps usually don't itch and they do not cause pain.

CAUSES

Unknown. It does run in families. It often occurs along with other skin disorders such as ichthyosis (an inherited dry skin condition). The condition cannot be spread from one person to another.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Family history of keratosis pilaris.
- Ichthyosis (dry and scaly skin disorder).

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Cannot be prevented at present.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Keratosis pilaris is a chronic, harmless skin problem with no permanent cure. The bumps may come and go over a period of time. Many cases clear up on their own as a person gets older. Cosmetic appearance and rough skin texture are often bothersome to patients.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

Complications are unlikely. A skin infection may occur if the affected area is scratched or overly treated with abrasive methods.



DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- If you are concerned about the skin rash, see your health care provider. The condition can be diagnosed by an exam of the affected area.
- Usually, no treatment is needed, but self-care measures may help the appearance.
- Use mild, unscented soap when bathing.
- Apply lubricating ointments or creams to the affected areas 2 or 3 times a day. The most useful time is immediately after bathing to help the skin retain moisture. There is no advantage to using expensive skin products or vitamin creams.
- Go over the affected skin area with a pumice stone, loofah sponge, or washcloth to gently loosen the plugs.

MEDICATIONS

Drugs are usually not needed for this condition. Your health care provider may prescribe a product to be applied to the skin if the condition is more severe.

ACTIVITY

No limits.

DIET

No special diet.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has signs of keratosis pilaris and are concerned about them.
- Appearance of the affected area changes. There may be a skin infection.

Special notes:

More notes on the back of this page