

PRICKLY HEAT

(Miliaria Rubra)

NOLENSVILLE FAMILY MEDICINE

JOHN R. THOMPSON M.D.

615-776-8088



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

A skin disorder caused by obstructed sweat-gland ducts. It affects all ages, but it is most common in infants.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Clusters of vesicles (small, fluid-filled skin blisters that may come and go within a matter of hours) or red rash without vesicles in areas of heavy sweating.

CAUSES

Obstruction of sweat-gland ducts for unknown reasons.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Obesity.
- Hot, humid weather.
- Genetic factors, such as fair, sensitive skin.
- Plastic bedsheets.
- High fever.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Avoid risk factors where possible.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Usually curable with treatment. Recurrence is common.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

A bacterial skin infection may develop.



DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- Take frequent cool showers or tub baths.
- Apply lubricating ointment or cream to skin 6 or 7 times a day.
- Use cool-water soaks to relieve itching and hasten healing. Pat skin dry, and dust with cornstarch after and between soaks.
- Wear cotton socks and leather-soled footwear rather than shoes made of synthetic materials.
- Expose the affected skin to air as much as possible.
- Don't use binding materials, such as adhesive tape, or wear tight clothing.
- Change diapers on infants as soon as they are wet.
- Avoid sunburn once you have had prickly heat. The body's inflammatory reaction to sunburn may trigger a new outbreak of prickly heat.
- Provide a cool, dry environment.
- See your health care provider if skin symptoms cause concern.

MEDICATIONS

- Nonprescription steroid cream applied 2 or 3 times a day (only upon recommendation of your physician).
- Oral antibiotics may be prescribed if there is a secondary bacterial infection.

ACTIVITY

Decrease activity during hot, humid weather or until skin heals.

DIET

No special diet.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

Prickly heat doesn't improve in 10 days, despite home care.

Special notes:

More notes on the back of this page