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Folliculitis keloidalis

Folliculitis keloidalis (also called acne cheloidalis nuchae, and acne keloidalis) is an unusual skin condition affecting the nape of the neck. It commonly affects adult Afro-Caribbean males with curly hair and other dark-skinned individuals, but it can occur in any individual. The condition may persist for many years.

Folliculitis keloidalis



Before treatment

prolonged antibiotics

After

Clinical features

Initially, itchy round small bumps appear within or close to the hair-bearing area of the back of the neck (occipital scalp). Sometimes there are pustules around the hair follicles ([folliculitis](#)). As time goes on the bumps become small scars and then the small scars may greatly enlarge to become [keloids](#). The scars are hairless and can form a band along the hairline.

The cause of folliculitis keloidalis nuchae is not known. It may be a form of [dermatitis](#) or a form of [acne](#). In most cases there are ingrown hairs which irritate the wall of the hair follicle resulting in inflammation.

Treatment

Unfortunately folliculitis keloidalis often persists despite a variety of treatments. The following measures are sometimes helpful:

- Make sure clothing does not rub the back of the neck
- Oral [tetracycline](#) or [antibiotics](#) for secondary infection

- Three-month course of [clindamycin](#) and [rifampicin](#) antibiotics
- [Topical steroids](#)
- Steroids injected into the lesions (intralesional injections)
- Oral [isotretinoin](#)
- [Radiotherapy](#)
- Surgery (ie surgically removing all the affected skin)
- Laser excision or vaporisation

Related information

On DermNet NZ:

- [Scalp folliculitis](#)
- [Folliculitis decalvans](#)
- [Hair, scalp, nails and sweating](#)

Other websites:

- [Acne Keloidalis Nuchae](#) – emedicine dermatology, the online textbook

Books about skin diseases:

See the [DermNet NZ bookstore](#)

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DermNet does not provide an on-line consultation service.

If you have any concerns with your skin or its treatment, see a [dermatologist](#) for advice.

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