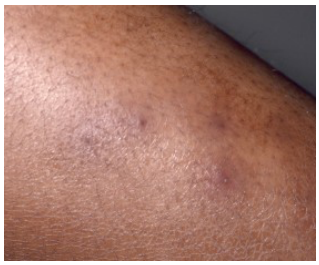
DOCTOR EDGES™
HAIR RESTORATION | DERMATOLOGY | AESTHETICS | WELLNESS

Folliculitis



Folliculitis is a skin condition caused by an inflammation hair follicles. It typically occurs in areas of irritation, such as sites of shaving, skin friction, or rubbing from clothes. In most cases of folliculitis, the inflamed follicles are infected with bacteria, especially with *Staphylococcus* (or "staph") organisms, that normally live on the skin. Bacteria such as *Pseudomonas* may live in hot tubs, spas, and swimming pools and may also cause folliculitis.

Who's At Risk

Folliculitis can affect individuals of any age, race/ethnicity, or gender. Risk factors include:

- Diabetes or suppressed immune system due to conditions like HIV, organ transplantation, or cancer.
- Underlying skin conditions such as eczema, acne, or dermatitis.
- Obesity.
- Frequent shaving.
- Pressure, such as prolonged sitting on the buttocks.

Signs & Symptoms

The most common locations include the scalp, buttocks, thighs, areas that are shaved such as the beard area, underarms, groin, and legs. Individual folliculitis lesions, such as pustules and papules, are centered on hair follicles and can vary from 2-5 mm in size. They may contain pus and be surrounded by inflamed skin. In lighter skin, they appear pink or red, while in darker skin, redness may be less visible. Lesions can break open, drain, and form scabs. Mild cases are tender and itchy, while severe cases can be painful and lead to complications like cellulitis, scarring, and hair loss. Mild to moderate cases typically clear up quickly with treatment. More severe cases of folliculitis may lead to complications such as cellulitis (an infection of the deeper skin tissue), scarring, and permanent hair loss.

Self-Care Guidelines

To prevent and clear up folliculitis:

• Shave in the direction of hair growth and avoid shaving irritated skin. Use a new disposable razor or electric razor each time. Also consider alternative hair removal methods like depilatories.
• Avoid tight clothing, especially during exercise, and wash athletic wear after each use.
• Use antibacterial soap or wash like PanOxyl Acne Creamy Wash or Hibiclens.
• Launder towels, washcloths, and bed linens frequently and avoid sharing personal items.
• Wear loose-fitting clothing.

When to Seek Medical Care

If self-care measures don't improve the condition within 2-3 days, if symptoms recur often, or if the infection spreads, see a Doctor Edges board-certified physician or dermatologist. Inform them of recent exposure to hot tubs, spas, or pools, as these can cause a less common form of folliculitis. If a skin infection persists despite 2-3 days of antibiotic treatment, consult your medical professional again.