

Keratosis pilaris

What is keratosis pilaris?

Keratosis pilaris (KP) is a common skin condition that looks like small rough bumps. The bumps are caused by plugged hair follicles. KP is found on the cheeks, backs of the arms or tops of the thighs.



How is it diagnosed?

A physical exam is done. KP is diagnosed by the location, appearance and texture of the skin. A skin biopsy is not needed.

What causes it?

The exact cause is not known. When a child has atopic dermatitis (eczema), there may also be keratosis pilaris. When there is a family history of allergic conditions, KP is more common.

How will it affect my child?

KP is not spread from person to person. It often gets better as your child gets older but may be present throughout life. It may be worse in the winter and improve in the summer. It normally does not itch. Sometimes it is confused with acne which also occurs on the cheeks.

How is it treated?

KP does not have to be treated. If KP does not bother your child, no treatment is needed. If KP is a problem, it can be treated with a cream or lotion medicine that is put on the skin. If treatment is stopped, most often KP will come back. There is no permanent cure for KP.

Tips for home care

- Avoid frequent bathing in winter.
- Use moisturizing creams two times a day.
- Use moisturizing soaps such as Dove® or Cetaphil®.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.