



University of North Carolina Wilmington  
Abrons Student Health Center

## INSTRUCTION SHEET: FOLLICULITIS

The Student Health Center provider has diagnosed folliculitis. Folliculitis is a common skin condition that appears as numerous small red or pink bumps at hair follicles. Folliculitis can affect any part of the skin, including the chest, back, arms, legs, buttocks and cheeks. Some of the bumps may be slightly red or have an accompanying light-red halo indicating inflammation. Sometimes, scratching off the top reveals a small trapped or coiled hair within. Acne whiteheads, called milia, may also be in the same areas as folliculitis. Although folliculitis is primarily a skin condition of teenagers and young adults, it is seen in all ages.

In general, folliculitis is often cosmetically displeasing but medically harmless. Many cases of folliculitis resolve spontaneously without treatment. Folliculitis frequently affects otherwise healthy people. Typically, it is a noncontagious, self-limited condition. Treatment may typically include one or a combination of antibacterial washes, antibiotic creams or lotions and antibiotic pills.

### MEASURES YOU CAN TAKE TO HELP TREAT YOUR FOLLICULITIS:

1. A holistic treatment may include soaking the affected area in a tub of diluted white vinegar (1 part vinegar to 4 parts of water) or soaking in a bathtub with very diluted Clorox bleach (1/4 cup of Clorox bleach in a bathtub of water).
2. If you have a bacterial folliculitis, the medical provider will prescribe topical antibacterial skin wash/lotion and/or oral antibiotics. It will be important to use the medication as prescribed and complete the treatment.
3. To prevent folliculitis from reoccurring preventive efforts include good skin hygiene. Avoid unsanitary hot tubs and pools, do not share razors, avoid shaving too closely, change out razors regularly, if shaving the genital area change the razor after each use and try to shave in the direction the hair grows and keep your skin moist and well hydrated. For recurrent episodes that do not respond to these measures consider using a depilatory product (i.e., NAIR) for hair removal.
4. If your skin condition worsens, or if you develop whole body symptoms such as fever, chills, nausea or vomiting return to the Student Health Center or see another medical provider promptly.