

# Keratosis Pilaris

## Definition

- A chronic condition of dry, rough skin on the upper arms
- Called Keratosis Pilaris (KP)

## Health Information

### Symptoms

- Rough and tiny bumps on the upper outer arms. (100% of patients)
- Also occurs on the outer thighs (60%) and buttocks (30%)
- Roughness may be described as sandpapery.
- The same on both sides of the body
- Skin is normal colored.
- It rarely causes any itching.

### Causes

- Dead skin cells plug the hair follicles
- KP does run in families (genetic). May occur in half of the sibs.
- Made worse by too much bathing and soap
- Soap removes the skin's natural protective oils. Once they are gone, the skin can't hold moisture.
- Dry climates make it worse, as does winter weather. Reason: low humidity inside.
- Can occur as early as 2 years.

### Prevention of Recurrent KP

- Don't use soaps or bubble bath.
- You may want to limit use of swimming pools or hot tubs. Reason: Pool chemicals are very drying.
- Run a humidifier in the winter if the air is dry.

## Care Advice

### 1. Overview:

- Keratosis Pilaris (KP) is a common condition. It occurs in up to 30% of adults.
- KP is not contagious to others.
- It is harmless and can be treated at home.
- Moisturizers are the key.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

### 2. Soap and Bathing:

- Young children with KP should avoid all soaps. Soaps take the natural protective oils out of the skin. Bubble bath does the most damage.
- For young children, the skin can be cleansed with warm water alone. Keep bathing to 10 minutes or less.
- Most young children only need to bathe twice a week.
- Teenagers can get by with using soap only for the armpits, genitals, and feet. Also, use a mild soap (such as Dove).
- Never use any soap on the areas with KP. This is very important.

3. **Moisturizing Cream:**

- Buy a large bottle of unscented moisturizing cream. Avoid those with fragrances.
- Put the cream on the KP areas 2 times per day.
- After warm water baths or showers, trap the moisture in the skin. Do this by putting on the cream quickly. Use the cream within 3 minutes of completing the bath.
- During the winter, apply the cream to all the skin. Do this every day to prevent dry skin.

4. **Steroid Cream:**

- Usually KP is not itchy unless you scrub it with soap.
- For very itchy spots, use 1% hydrocortisone cream. No prescription is needed.
- Use up to 2 times per day as needed until the itching is better.
- Eventually, the moisturizing cream will be all that you need for treating KP.

5. **Prescription Creams:**

- There are some peeling agents that make KP look somewhat better.
- But they are expensive and only give improvement while they are being used.
- There is no cream that can cure KP.

6. **Humidifier:**

- If your winters are dry, protect your child's skin from the constant drying effect.
- Do this by running a room humidifier full time.

7. **What to Expect:**

- With treatment, the skin should feel softer within 1 week.
- KP however will never completely go away.

## Call Your Doctor If

- After 2 weeks of treatment, KP is not better
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

### Pediatric Care Advice

**Author:** Barton Schmitt MD, FAAP

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