

skin | pseudofolliculitis barbae

the best ingredients to use and avoid

PSEUDOFOLLICULITIS BARBAE (PFB)

is known by many as razor bumps, shaving bumps, ingrown hairs, pili incarnati or folliculitis barbae traumatica. It is estimated that over 50 percent of African American males are genetically predisposed to pseudofolliculitis barbae due to the curvature of the hair follicle. Hispanics, Caucasians and hirsute women who have curly hair can also have this condition.

Causes

The cause of this condition for many men afflicted with it originates from an attempt to get a closer shave. In these cases, the skin is pulled taut, and initially shaved in the direction of hair growth, then re-shaved against the grain. When the skin is released, the sharp angular hair tip re-enters the skin, and most often pierces the follicular wall, causing inflammation. This re-entry of hair creates painful, firm papules and pustule eruptions, accompanied by swelling and itching to the affected area. These eruptions may surround hair buried inside, making shaving very difficult and quite painful. Once the hair penetrates the epidermis, it may eventually perforate the dermis, causing severe abscess formations. These abscesses generally result in hypertrophic or keloid scarring. In terms of treatment, it is necessary to address these abscess lesions or any secondary infections with a referral to a dermatologist for possible antibiotic therapy.

When treating the papules and pustules, professionals should take into consideration that while this condition mimics acne, PFB has nothing to do with the inflammatory process involving the sebaceous gland. The cause, as noted above, is the re-emergence of a foreign object into the skin, causing a response that promotes inflammatory and non-inflammatory eruptions.

Men with darker skin tones tend to have a "shadowing" or post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation (PIH) of the bearded area. This is caused by the ir-

ritation from frequent shaving. This irritation stimulates the melanocytes to produce melanin, dropping excessive pigment into the frequently shaved area. This is also known as "razor burn," and is seen as erythema in Caucasian or lighter skin types.

Effective shaving tips for clients with PFB

The history of PFB is generally from improper shaving techniques. Shaving should always begin with the softening of the beard. This can be accomplished by using a very warm moistened towel,



Apply a professional grade, highly lubricated shaving cream. Leave the shaving cream on the skin for approximately one minute.

wrapped barber style around the face for approximately five minutes. Another technique is the use of a soft-bristled toothbrush. By applying gentle circular motions to the bearded area, hairs attempting to re-enter the skin will be dislodged and exfoliate dead cells. Darker skin types are prone to having a compact horny layer, which prevents the penetration of ingredients in follow-up products. Next, apply a professional grade, highly lubricated shaving cream. Leave the shaving cream on the skin for approximately one minute.

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Chamomile extract: Has clinically proven anti-inflammatory and skin repairing properties. Also considered a bactericidal, anti-itching, soothing agent with the ability to neutralize skin irritants.

To prevent the possibility of shaving too closely, use a sharp, single-edged, foil-guarded blade. Shave in the direction of the hair growth for a maximum of two passes. Rinse residual hair from the blade with hot water after each pass. After use, sterilize the blade by rinsing off any residual hairs, and wipe it off with alcohol. Blades should be discarded after two uses.

Ingredients to avoid:

Avoid oils on skin with razor bumps. Oils can trap bacteria in the pores of the skin and cause folliculitis.

- Acetylated lanolin (synthetic)
- Cocoa butter
- Coconut oil
- Cotton seed oil
- Soybean oil
- Wheat germ oil

Best ingredients to use

Acetylsalicylic acid: Eases inflammation; reduces irritation and swelling.

Aloe vera: Hydrating, softening and healing, with anti-microbial and anti-inflammatory properties.

Bentonite: A colloidal aluminum silicate clay that absorbs excess oil; astringent properties help shrink and tighten enlarged, irritated pores.

Benzoyl peroxide: Anti-bacterial properties. Caution: May cause irritation in sensitive skins (controversial).

Bromelain: A proteolytic agent found in pineapples effectively reduces inflammation from infection.

Chamomile extract: Has clinically proven anti-inflammatory and skin repairing properties. Also considered a bactericidal, anti-itching, soothing agent with the ability to neutralize skin irritants.

Diglycerin: Properties similar to glycerin, it coats and moisturizes the damaged skin areas.

Enzymes: Speeds up the natural skin renewal process. Alleviates skin irritation and inflammation.

Glycerin: Maintains moisture and natural oils on the skin. Attracts moisture and reduces the over-drying of the skin.

Glycolic acid 2.5 pH or above: Helps dissolve desmosomes, and allows penetration of other ingredients.

Hydrocortisone: Relieves itching, dryness and inflammation.

Isopropyl alcohol: Used in many bacteria fighting products. It kills the bacteria on and under the bump to prevent infection (controversial).

Kaolin: Absorbs oil and draws impurities from the skin without removing natural oils.

Lanolin oil (natural): Has moisturizing properties with high water absorption capabilities (controversial).

Panthenol: An anti-inflammatory agent that stimulates cellular proliferation, aids in tissue repair and attracts water from the environment.

Papain: An enzyme from papaya dissolves keratin buildup.

Salicylic acid 30%, 2.5 pH or above: A keratolytic agent that helps to reduce dead cells and debris within the follicle. Also has anti-inflammatory properties.

Sodium PCA: Exists naturally in the skin and is a high-performance humectant.

Sorbitol: Absorbs moisture from the air to prevent skin dryness.

Squalene: A moisturizer and skin lubricant that helps to replenish skin lipids.

Sunflower oil: High in linoleic acids that soften and smooth the skin. Also contains lecithin and carotenoids.

Vitamin A: Increases cell turnover, helping to stimulate cell production while improving skin tone.

Zinc: Accelerates wound healing and offers protection against UV radiation. Has a synergistic effect with vitamins A and E. Helps lower sebaceous secretions. ■

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