

## **KERATOSIS PILARIS**

Keratosis pilaris is a common skin condition. It affects children and adults of all ages. It is often associated with eczema, dry, sensitive skin, asthma, or hayfever. Sometimes a person will only have keratosis pilaris and other family members have one or more of the other conditions.

Keratosis pilaris refers to a rough feeling of the skin, which tends to occur on the cheeks, the outer aspects of the upper arms and the front of the thighs. There are small white bumpy type areas and redness in between. It is best thought of as an exaggeration of the normal follicle pattern in the skin. The word keratosis refers to rough skin. The word pilaris refers to the bumpiness.

Keratosis pilaris is only a skin condition. It is not associated with any internal problems. It is simply a sign of having slightly sensitive skin.

Fortunately, treatment is available to control the problem but there is no true cure for the condition. The treatment normally involves the daily use of a mild soap/cleanser and the application of a lotion after the shower or bath.

There are a few different kinds of medications that help. Some of the more commonly used products are ammonium lactate lotion (Lac-Hydrin), Cerave SA lotion, Gold Bond rough and bumpy, and Cetaphil lotion. I will provide a specific recommendation but more important than the actual lotion is getting into the habit of using it regularly. As the condition improves, the frequency of using this medication can be decreased.

Keratosis pilaris often improves on its own in the summertime because of the increased relative humidity. It can recur at various times of the year and the treatments can be restarted. In general the problem tends to improve over time and often can disappear completely but it may take months or years for this to happen.