



What is it? Keratosis pilaris (KP) is a common condition that affects up to 40% of the population. It is common in children and young adults, but may persist into later age. Tiny skin-colored to red, rough, little bumps occur on the outer upper arms, thighs and cheeks resulting in a sandpaper-like or “goose bump” texture to these areas.

What is the cause? A plug of dead skin forms within the hair follicle, resulting in the characteristic bumps. It is usually worse in the winter or dry weather and can be associated with eczema.

Is it harmful? Keratosis pilaris is a benign condition and treatment is mainly for cosmetic reasons.

What treatments are available? Moisturizers with mild peeling agents such as urea, lactic acid, or glycolic acid, open the plugged hair follicle and remove the excess skin. Keeping the skin well moisturized to avoid dryness is helpful as well. Avoid of hot showers, hot tubs and use of minimal soap and thick moisturizing creams will help to keep skin moisturized.

Topical retinoids may also be used.

Is there a cure? There is currently no cure for this condition and treatment needs to be used on a regular basis or it recurs. People respond differently to treatment, and sometimes it can be very difficult to control the symptoms, especially the redness.