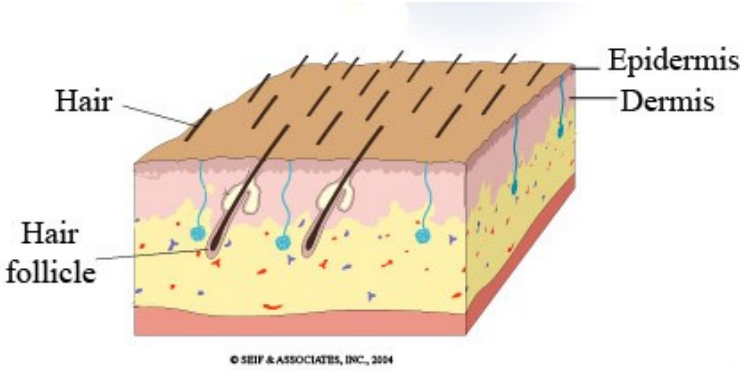
Pseudofolliculitis Barbae
(Razor Bumps, Ingrown Hairs)

Pseudofolliculitis barbae is a reaction from shaving curly hair too closely. This is very common in African-Americans, but can occur in others as well. It is usually more severe in the neck area, but can occur in all shaved areas such as the groin, scalp and legs. It is usually long lasting unless close shaving is avoided. When curly hair is shaved closely, it grows out from below the skin surface. The hair then becomes ingrown by re-entering the skin surface. This causes a skin reaction and may cause small pockets of infection.



DIAGNOSIS
This diagnosis is often made by physical exam. Sometimes cultures may be taken to find if infection is present.

TREATMENT
- Stop shaving until swelling and soreness (*inflammation*) is under control.
- Using a "Buff Puff" in a gentle circular motion on the face may help dislodge ingrown hairs.
- Antibiotics and local steroids may be used in resistant cases. Your caregiver can advise you.
- Hair removal creams such as Nair® or Neet® may be used weekly. Stop using them if they become too irritating. You can test for irritation by putting a small amount on your arm before applying the cream to your face.
- You may start shaving again once the inflammation has gone away.
- Laser therapy may be used to destroy hair follicles.

SHAVING INSTRUCTIONS AFTER TREATMENT
- Shower before shaving. Keep areas to be shaved packed in warm moist wraps for several minutes before shaving.
- Use thick shaving gels before shaving.
- Dislodge hair tips that have begun to pierce the skin. Do this with either a clean toothbrush or a sterile needle. The needle may be cleansed in alcohol. This can be done before bathing and at bedtime.
- Using a Bump Fighter razor will help by cutting the hair slightly above the skin level.
- Use electric shavers with a longer shave setting.
- Shave in the direction of hair growth. Avoid multiple razor strokes.
- Use moisturizing lotions following shaving.

If treatment and shaving instructions do not help, you may need to **stop shaving.**

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