

Folliculitis of the Scalp

What is folliculitis of the scalp?

The openings in the skin that hold the hair root are called hair follicles. When the scalp is injured or plugged, bacteria get into the hair follicles. This can cause an infection which easily spreads to other hair follicles. This infection is called Folliculitis. It can cause the scalp to be sore and tender. The infection may come from:

- A bacteria called *Staphylococcus aureus*. It is normally found on the skin.
- An injury to the hair follicle. This can happen when your child's hair is pulled too tight, or during hair styling. Using chemical hair products on the scalp can also cause injury.



Hair follicles

Folliculitis is not contagious. This means other people cannot catch it from your child. But, it can spread to your child's scalp or body.

How is it diagnosed?

The type and location of sores will help the doctor or nurse know that your child has scalp folliculitis. The sores often start as small red bumps that quickly change to larger sores. The sores are often covered with yellow-brown scabs or may drain pus. The sores normally spread and increase in number. Your child may complain that the scalp is painful, burning or itchy.

How is it treated?

- Most often, scalp folliculitis is treated with an antibiotic by mouth. It can also be treated with an antibiotic that is put on the scalp.
- Remove braids or other hairstyles that pull the hair. Gently wash your child's hair with a mild shampoo. Hair that gets infected often needs to be washed more.
- Do not use hair products on your child's hair while the infection heals. Do not share hair care products with anyone else.
- After the infection heals, continue good scalp hygiene. Do not pull too tight when styling your child's hair. Braids in the hair are too tight if you cannot stick your pinky finger easily underneath the braid.

Wash or throw away any items that came in contact with infected hair and cannot be cleaned. Be sure to wash bed linens and toss hair gels that may have been contaminated.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has:

- Sores that continue to spread after 48 hours of treatment.
- A temperature of 101°F (38.3°C) or higher.
- Special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.