



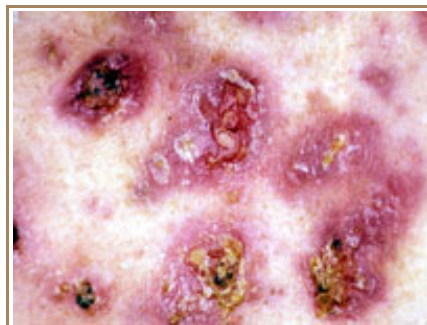
[Authoritative facts](#) about the skin from the [New Zealand Dermatological Society Incorporated](#).

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Acne fulminans

Acne fulminans is a rare and very severe form of [acne conglobata](#) associated with systemic symptoms. It nearly always affects males.

Acne fulminans



Clinical features

It is characterised by:

- Abrupt onset
- Inflammatory and ulcerated nodular acne on chest and back
- Severe acne scarring
- Fluctuating fever
- Painful joints
- Malaise (ie. the patient feels unwell)
- Loss of appetite and weight loss
- Raised white blood cell count.

Although it mostly just happens, it may be precipitated by:

- Testosterone (legally prescribed or illegally taken to enhance muscle growth)
- [Isotretinoin](#)

The syndrome [SAPHO](#) (Synovitis, Acne, Pustulosis, Hyperostosis and Osteitis) may be a serious complication of acne fulminans.

Management

Patients with acne fulminans should consult a [dermatologist](#) urgently. Management can prove difficult, and several medications are usually required. These may include:

- High doses of oral [antibiotics](#) such as erythromycin (2g/day)
- Anti-inflammatory medications such as salicylates (aspirin)
- Systemic [oral steroids](#) such as prednisone (20–60mg/day)

- [Dapsone](#)
- [Isotretinoin](#)

Topical acne medications are unhelpful.

Related information

On DermNet NZ:

- [Acne](#)
- [Acne conglobata](#)
- [SAPHO](#)

Other websites:

- [Acne fulminans](#) - emedicine dermatology, the online textbook

Books about skin diseases:

See the [DermNet NZ bookstore](#)

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DermNet does not provide an on-line consultation service.

If you have any concerns with your skin or its treatment, see a [dermatologist](#) for advice.

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