



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

[Home](#) | [Acne](#)

Oil folliculitis

Occupational or therapeutic contact with mineral oils or tar can result in [comedones](#) and inflamed hair follicles ([folliculitis](#)).

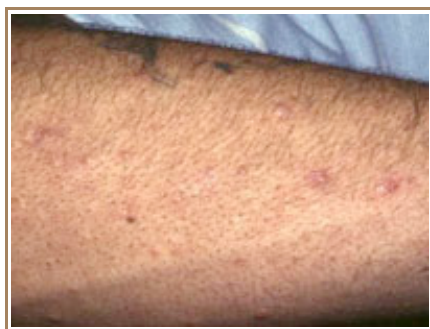
Excessive oil on the skin can result in small pustules with a red halo in affected areas. Commonly, the lesions are seen on the forearms and thighs. The follicles may obviously be plugged with oil. The pustules may be sterile or contain the harmless skin bacteria, *Staphylococcus epidermidis*. They may be painless or painful.

Occupations at risk of oil folliculitis include:

- Oil field and refinery workers (crude petroleum)
- Engineering industry
- Diesel mechanics (impure paraffin mixtures)
- Sheep shearers (wool fats)
- Road workers (coal tar distillates including pitch, creosote)

Topical creams or ointments containing [coal tar](#) can also cause oil folliculitis. These are used for the treatment of [eczema](#) and [psoriasis](#).

Oil folliculitis



Folliculitis in a mechanic



Open comedones due to oil folliculitis



Folliculitis in a sheep farmer

Management

The skin should be carefully protected from contact with the responsible material and washed twice daily with a mild soap and water. Change overalls every day.

If the folliculitis doesn't settle by itself, standard [treatments](#) for moderate acne usually prove effective.

Related information

On DermNet NZ:

- [Acne and other follicular disorders](#)

Other websites:

Books about skin diseases:

See the [DermNet NZ bookstore](#)

Author: [Dr Amanda Oakley](#) MBChB FRACP, Dept of Dermatology Health Waikato

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.

Created 1999. Last updated 25 Dec 2006. © 2007 NZDS. Disclaimer.