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Tinea barbae

Tinea barbae is the name used for infection of the beard and moustache areas of the face with a [dermatophyte](#) fungus. It is less common than [tinea capitis](#) and generally affects only adult men.

The cause of tinea barbae is most often a zoophilic (animal) fungus:

- *T. verrucosum* (originating from cattle)
- *T. mentagrophytes* var. *equinum* (originating from horses)

Tinea barbae is usually due to infection of coarse facial hair with an ectothrix pattern (spores on the outside). In ectothrix infections, the fungal filaments (hyphae) and spores (arthroconidia) cover the outside of the hair.

Fungal beard infection (tinea barbae)



Image supplied by Dr Shahbaz A. Janjua

Clinical features

Tinea barbae most often affects farmers and is due to direct contact with an infected animal. It is rarely passed from one person to another.

Tinea barbae is usually very inflamed with red lumpy areas, pustules and crusting around the hairs (a kerion). The hairs can be pulled out easily. Surprisingly, it is not excessively itchy or painful.

Tinea barbae can result in an [id](#) reaction, especially just after starting antifungal treatment.

Diagnosis

The diagnosis of tinea barbae is confirmed by microscopy and culture of skin scrapings and hair pulled out by the roots.

Related information

On DermNet NZ:

- [Tinea](#)
- [Introduction to fungal infections](#)
- [Laboratory tests for fungal infections](#)
- [Treatment of fungal infections](#)

Other websites:

- [Tinea barbae](#) - emedicine dermatology, the online textbook

Books:

See the [DermNet NZ bookstore](#)

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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