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Solar comedones

Solar or senile [comedones](#) arise on the face of the middle-aged and elderly. They affect areas that have been exposed to sunlight over a long period of time, particularly the cheeks, which may become yellow and leathery (solar elastosis). The appearance is also known as *Favre-Racouchot* syndrome.

The comedones may be open (blackheads) or closed (whiteheads). There may also be larger cysts.

Solar comedones are not related to [acne vulgaris](#) and do not usually become inflamed. They are however very persistent.

Solar comedones



Image from Dr S Janjua

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Management

- Wash affected areas twice daily with mild soap and water
- Protect affected areas from further sun exposure
- Keep out of the midday sun (stay indoors or seek shade between 11 am and 3 pm)
- Wear a broad brimmed hat
- Apply a broad-spectrum oil-free sunscreen to exposed skin
- Apply [retinoid](#) cream to affected areas at night (this requires a doctor's prescription)
- Apply light [moisturisers](#) if the skin is dry (dryness may be aggravated by the retinoid)
- The contents of the comedones can be squeezed out gently using a "comedo extractor", an instrument which can be purchased at a pharmacy.

If these measures are unhelpful, the comedones can often be removed by cautery, diathermy or laser treatment. They may recur and require further treatment from time to time.

Related information

On DermNet NZ:

- [Comedones](#)
- [Comedonal acne](#)

Other websites:

[Favre-Racouchot syndrome](#) - e-medicine 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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