



Folliculitis Fact Sheet

What is *Pseudomonas folliculitis*?

Pseudomonas folliculitis is an inflammation of the hair follicles caused by infection with the bacteria *P. aeruginosa*. It has been reported in persons using hot tubs, whirlpools, saunas, swimming pools, waterslides and physiotherapy pools.

Who gets *Pseudomonas folliculitis*?

Any person exposed to water contaminated with *P. aeruginosa* can get *Pseudomonas folliculitis*.

Where is *P. aeruginosa* found?

Pseudomonas aeruginosa thrives in warm and moist areas and is commonly found in soil, sinks and drains, shower-floors, carpeting and even tap water.

What are the symptoms of *Pseudomonas folliculitis*?

Pseudomonas folliculitis first appears as itchy bumps and develops into dark red tender nodules and/or small pus-filled pimples. The eruptions typically involve the trunk and upper parts of the arms and legs. The rash can be extensive and may affect all areas of the body except the palms of the hands and soles of the feet. Headache, nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, sore throat, rhinitis, sore eyes, and fever may accompany the rash.

How soon after exposures do symptoms of *Pseudomonas folliculitis* appear?

The incubation period for "*Pseudomonas folliculitis*" is usually 48 hours (range 8 hours to 5 days) after exposure to contaminated water.

How can *Pseudomonas folliculitis* be diagnosed?

Pseudomonas aeruginosa can often be cultured from pus-filled pustules on the skin.

What is the treatment for *Pseudomonas folliculitis*?

The rash associated with this infection will usually go away on its own and treatment may not be needed. "Anti-itch" medications may be used to control the itching.

How can *Pseudomonas folliculitis* be prevented?

Be aware that hot tubs and spas have warmer water than pools, so chlorine or other disinfectants evaporate faster. This leaves hot tubs and spas at risk for the spread of *Pseudomonas folliculitis*. Therefore, ask your pool manager about the bromine/chlorine and pH-testing program at your hot tub or pool. Ensuring frequent testing, control of bromine/chlorine levels, and pH control are likely to prevent the spread of dermatitis.