# New insights into distinguishing bacne from folliculitis for targeted skin care



Back acne, commonly known as bacne, is a frequent and often uncomfortable condition characterised by red, pimple-like spots that may sometimes be filled with pus. It typically arises when the pores on the back become clogged with excess oil, dead skin cells, sweat, and bacteria, leading to inflammation. While bacne can be a persistent nuisance, it is usually manageable with proper hygiene and treatment. Excessive sweating is a known contributor to the risk of developing bacne, which is why regular showering after sweating and wearing loose, breathable clothing are crucial preventive measures. Additionally, frequently changing bed linens can help reduce the bacterial environment that fosters acne outbreaks.

Over-the-counter treatments targeting acne symptoms are widely available. Ingredients such as salicylic acid work to unclog pores, while benzoyl peroxide serves to reduce inflammation and bacterial presence on the skin. If these topical remedies prove insufficient, medical intervention might be necessary. General practitioners can prescribe stronger options, including retinoid creams that prevent pore blockages and isotretinoin, a potent medication reserved for severe acne cases.

However, it’s important to consider that sudden painful spots on the back might not be bacne but could indicate folliculitis, a different skin condition where hair follicles become inflamed. Folliculitis typically starts with small pimples that can progress into pustules or blisters, often accompanied by soreness and itchiness. This condition can be triggered by bacterial or fungal infections, and certain factors such as poor hygiene, a weakened immune system, pre-existing skin conditions like eczema or acne, tight clothing, or grooming practices like shaving and waxing can exacerbate it.

Folliculitis generally resolves on its own within a few days if mild, but more severe or persistent infections require treatment. Washing the affected area regularly is crucial, and antiseptic body washes such as those containing chlorhexidine are often recommended to reduce bacterial load. For more significant infections, medical professionals may prescribe antibiotic or antifungal washes to combat the infection effectively. As with bacne, wearing loose and breathable clothing and avoiding heavy skin products can help improve symptoms and prevent recurrence.

The distinction between bacne and folliculitis is pivotal because their treatments differ—bacne responds well to acne-specific skincare routines, while folliculitis requires targeted antimicrobial therapies. The Mayo Clinic and American Academy of Dermatology emphasize that persistent or severe skin issues warrant professional evaluation to ensure correct diagnosis and appropriate treatment.

For those experiencing painful or worsening spots on their back, it is advisable to consult a healthcare provider to rule out folliculitis or other conditions needing specialist care. Addressing the causes and following tailored treatment plans can significantly reduce discomfort and the risk of complications.

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* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-15161577/terrible-acne-uncomfortable-rid-DR-ELLIE-condition.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/dont-turn-your-back-on-back-acne), [[5]](https://www.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/22756-back-acne)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-15161577/terrible-acne-uncomfortable-rid-DR-ELLIE-condition.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/dont-turn-your-back-on-back-acne), [[5]](https://www.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/22756-back-acne)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-15161577/terrible-acne-uncomfortable-rid-DR-ELLIE-condition.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/folliculitis/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20361662), [[4]](https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/folliculitis/symptoms-causes/syc-20361634), [[6]](https://www.aad.org/public/diseases/a-z/folliculitis/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-15161577/terrible-acne-uncomfortable-rid-DR-ELLIE-condition.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/folliculitis/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20361662), [[6]](https://www.aad.org/public/diseases/a-z/folliculitis/), [[7]](https://www.webmd.com/skin-problems-and-treatments/what-is-pityrosporum-folliculitis)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-15161577/terrible-acne-uncomfortable-rid-DR-ELLIE-condition.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/folliculitis/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20361662), [[6]](https://www.aad.org/public/diseases/a-z/folliculitis/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-15161577/terrible-acne-uncomfortable-rid-DR-ELLIE-condition.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/dont-turn-your-back-on-back-acne> - This article from the Mayo Clinic Health System discusses back acne, or 'bacne', highlighting its causes, symptoms, and treatment options. It explains that bacne occurs when pores become clogged with oil, leading to red, inflamed bumps, blackheads, or whiteheads. Factors such as hormonal changes, certain medications, stress, and the use of oily skin or hair products can trigger bacne. Treatments include topical medications like benzoyl peroxide, retinoids, and antibiotics, as well as oral medications such as antibiotics or isotretinoin. Lifestyle changes, including regular showering after sweating, wearing loose-fitting clothing, and using gentle cleansers, can also help manage bacne.
3. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/folliculitis/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20361662> - The Mayo Clinic provides comprehensive information on folliculitis, a skin condition where hair follicles become inflamed, often due to bacterial infections. Symptoms include clusters of small bumps or pimples around hair follicles, pus-filled blisters, itchy or painful skin, and inflamed bumps. Treatment depends on the type and severity of the condition and may involve topical or oral antibiotics, antifungal medications, and in some cases, minor surgical procedures to drain large boils. The article also discusses preventive measures and when to seek medical attention.
4. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/folliculitis/symptoms-causes/syc-20361634> - This Mayo Clinic article outlines the causes and symptoms of folliculitis, a common skin condition where hair follicles become inflamed. It details various types of folliculitis, including bacterial folliculitis, hot tub folliculitis, razor bumps, and pityrosporum folliculitis. The article emphasizes that folliculitis can result from infections, physical injury, or other factors, and provides guidance on recognizing symptoms and seeking appropriate treatment.
5. <https://www.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/22756-back-acne> - Cleveland Clinic's article on back acne ('bacne') explains that it develops when sweat, oil, dead skin cells, and bacteria clog skin pores. Factors such as family history, friction from clothing, hormonal changes, certain medications, and poor hygiene can contribute to bacne. The article recommends treatments like keeping the skin clean, using acne-fighting skin creams, and making lifestyle changes to manage and prevent bacne.
6. <https://www.aad.org/public/diseases/a-z/folliculitis/> - The American Academy of Dermatology provides information on folliculitis, a skin condition where hair follicles become inflamed, often due to bacterial infections. The article discusses common causes, including hot tubs, shaving, tight clothing, and certain medications. It offers advice on prevention, such as wearing loose clothing, using well-maintained hot tubs, and proper shaving techniques, and emphasizes the importance of consulting a dermatologist for persistent cases.
7. <https://www.webmd.com/skin-problems-and-treatments/what-is-pityrosporum-folliculitis> - WebMD's article on pityrosporum folliculitis explains that it's caused by a yeast called pityrosporum or malassezia, which is normally present on everyone's skin. Under certain conditions, this yeast can multiply and cause an itchy, acne-like eruption. The article discusses risk factors, including adolescence, immunosuppression, diabetes, steroid or antibiotic use, excessive sweating, and being male, and provides information on symptoms and treatment options.