

CANCER TREATMENT EDUCATION



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ACNEIFORM RASH

What is acneiform rash?

- Acneiform rash (also called acne-like rash) looks like acne, with raised red bumps, redness, and irritation.
 - Despite the similar appearance, it should not be treated with acne medications.
- It most often occurs on the face, chest, back, arms, and scalp.

What should I know about acneiform rash?

- It is a common side effect of a type of medication called an EGFR (epidermal growth factor receptor) blocker.
- The acne-like rash often starts within the first 2–4 weeks of treatment.
- At first it may feel warm, tender, or like a burning sensation. It may then turn red and feel swollen.
- Eventually you may experience raised bumps, sometimes called papules or pustules, that crust over and become very dry, itchy, or painful.
- Severe acneiform rash may lead to infection if not properly managed.
 - Your skin may also be more prone to sunburn.
- Acneiform rash can change your appearance, which may lead to changes in body image and feeling uncomfortable or depressed.

What puts me at risk of experiencing acneiform rash?

- Being male may increase the risk for acneiform rash.
- The rash is typically worse with higher doses of EGFR blockers.
 - Developing an acneiform rash may mean that your cancer might respond better to the treatment you are receiving.

How is acneiform rash identified/evaluated/diagnosed?

- Acneiform rash may present after beginning treatment with an EGFR blocker and may appear as papules and/or pustules.
- The acneiform rash may be tender and itchy.

What can I do to prevent acneiform rash or manage it once it appears?

- Do:
 - Use a daily moisturizing cream on skin at least 2 times daily.
 - Use sunscreen of at least SPF 30 when outside and avoid prolonged direct sun exposure.
 - Gently clean skin with mild soap and warm water and pat to dry.
 - Ask your care team if they recommend:
 - An over-the-counter steroid cream to be used on the skin
 - An antihistamine to help with itching
- Avoid:
 - Long hot showers that can irritate and dry out skin.
 - Lotions that contain alcohol or fragrance.
 - Using benzoyl peroxide or retinoid cream because this does not help acneiform rash and may add to the irritation.

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What might my care team provide to help?

- To help prevent severe acneiform rash, your care team may prescribe:
 - Certain antibiotics to take by mouth
 - Additional topical steroids or antibiotic creams to apply directly to the affected areas of the skin
- Before starting treatment with an EGFR blocker, your care team should carefully look over your skin and note any areas that already show any signs of bumps, redness, or tenderness.
- At each visit after starting treatment, this should be repeated to note any signs of skin changes.
- You should also carefully examine your skin each day to look for early signs of changes.

When should I call my care team?

- At the first signs of a rash that looks like acne after starting treatment with an EGFR blocker.
- If any areas of rash show signs of drainage, pus, or open sores.
- If your rash becomes so severe that it limits your ability to do your normal daily activities or sleep at night.
- If your rash is causing you to feel depressed.

How can I tell if my acneiform rash is getting better?

- It may take up to 4 weeks for the rash to improve. Signs of improvement include:
 - Decreased redness and tenderness.
 - Bumps start to dry and crust over.
 - You may still see discoloration where the rash used to be.

What questions should I ask my care team about acneiform rash?

- Is it helpful for me to track my symptoms? What do you recommend?
- Do any of my other medical conditions increase my chance of experiencing acne-like rash?
- Do you recommend any changes to my medications to help prevent or control acne-like rash?
- What lifestyle changes do you recommend to manage my acne-like rash?
- What are my options if acne-like rash cannot be controlled while I am receiving cancer treatment?

Where can I find out more information about acneiform rash?

Hair, Skin, and Nail Problems | American Cancer Society

- <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/side-effects/hair-skin-nails.html>

Skin Reactions to Targeted Therapy and Immunotherapy | Cancer.Net

- <https://www.cancer.net/coping-with-cancer/physical-emotional-and-social-effects-cancer/managing-physical-side-effects/skin-reactions-targeted-therapy-and-immunotherapy>

Skin and Nail Changes During Cancer Treatment | National Cancer Institute

- <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/side-effects/skin-nail-changes>

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Additional instructions

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