



By Laurel Chmura

Milia are small, yellow or white cysts that form as hard bumps on the skin, usually on the face, usually around the eyelids and cheeks. People of any age can get them, but mostly they are found on adults.

### **CAUSES**

Milia can be caused by a number of things. They can form when skin flakes or keratin, a protein, become trapped under the skin. They can be caused by certain oral medications. They may also result from the topical application of steroid creams.

### **PREVENTION**

It is not always possible to prevent milia, for example when they occur in newborns. However, in other cases, swift treatment may keep them from appearing. Tips include:

- ◇ Avoid excessive sun exposure
- ◇ Avoid thick creams and oil-based products
- ◇ Exfoliate 2-3 times per week

### **HOME REMEDIES**

In most cases, milia will disappear on their own within a few months. These low-risk home remedies may speed recovery:

- ◇ Clean the area with a mild cleanser
- ◇ Steam open the pores
- ◇ Exfoliate as recommended, using caution not to over-exfoliate.
- ◇ Use sun screen
- ◇ Topical application of a combination of rose water, cinnamon and honey

NEVER pick at milia. This can lead to infection and scarring.

### **RISK FACTORS**

Milia carry very few risks.

When milia are associated with another condition or injury, that condition should be treated separately.

It is important that milia are correctly diagnosed. They can be confused with other types of skin conditions, including comedones, miliaria, and other types of cysts.

If milia becomes a concern, discuss treatment options with a doctor.

### **OUTLOOK**

Milia tend not to cause long-term problems and in most cases will resolve itself without treatment.

### **MEDICAL TREATMENT**

Medical treatment is usually not necessary, but if milia becomes a concern a doctor may recommend:

- ◇ De-roofing - A doctor uses a sterile needle or blade to remove the milia. Do not attempt this at home, as you can run the risk of infection.
- ◇ Curettage - A doctor numbs the area, removes the milia, then seals the skin with a hot wire.
- ◇ Cryotherapy - The milia are frozen off, often with liquid nitrogen. This can cause blistering or swelling, which should disappear within a few days.
- ◇ Minocycline - This oral antibiotic can be helpful in treating certain types of milia.