Granuloma Annulare

Granuloma annulare is a skin condition that causes non-cancerous small bumps or patches on the skin. The bumps often form a ring shape and is often confused with ringworm. It is not an infection or contagious. Most people do not have pain or itching. Many cases go away on their own.

Causes

The cause of granuloma annulare is not known. It may happen when the immune system reacts to something such as:

- A minor skin injury, such as a bug bite or scratch
- Some medicines
- Health conditions such as diabetes or thyroid disease

Not everyone with these triggers will develop granuloma annulare.

Signs and Symptoms

Granuloma annulare can look different from person to person.

The **localized type** is the most common. It causes ring-shaped patches with raised edges. These patches often appear on the hands, feet, arms, or legs. The bumps may be pink, skin colored, or purple.

The **generalized type** causes many bumps over larger areas of the body. The bumps may join together and form larger patches.

The **subcutaneous type** causes firm lumps under the skin. These lumps usually do not cause pain. This type is most common in children.

The **perforating type** is rare. It may cause scaly bumps that leak fluid. It may also cause itching and scarring.

The **patch type** is rare. It causes flat red or purple patches that may cover larger areas of skin.

Treatment

Many people do not need treatment. The condition often goes away on its own within 2 years. If treatment is needed, options may include:

- Steroid creams or ointments
- Steroid shots
- Freezing the spots with liquid nitrogen
- Light therapy (phototherapy)
- Medicines such as hydroxychloroquine, antibiotics, or methotrexate
- Injectable medicines, such as adalimumab (Humira®)

Treatment can take time. The condition may come back after it clears.

Home Care

To care for your skin:

- **Avoid** scratching or picking at the bumps
- Use gentle skin care products
- Keep your skin moisturized
- Follow your treatment plan if one was prescribed

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 10/2026 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#8549