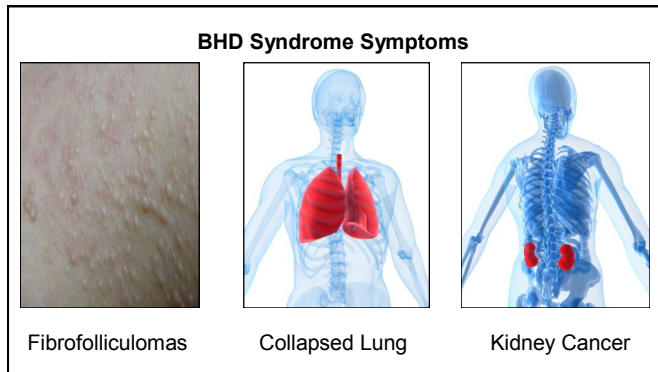


# Birt-Hogg-Dubé Syndrome: Skin Symptoms & Treatment

## Introduction

Birt-Hogg-Dubé (BHD) syndrome is a rare genetic disorder characterised by the development of benign skin tumours, recurrent collapsed lung (pneumothorax) and, in some cases, kidney cancer.



## Skin Symptoms

The skin lesions associated with BHD Syndrome are clinically known as fibrofolliculomas and develop as white bumps/growths on the skin around your face, scalp, neck and upper torso. Fibrofolliculomas are also known as:

- hamartomas;
- skin nodules and;
- papules.

Fibrofolliculomas usually begin to develop in early adulthood and an individual may develop none, one or several hundred over their lifetime. The skin condition is permanent and there is currently no preventative treatment.

## Treatment

Consultation with an expert dermatologist is highly recommended and it would be wise to make sure the doctor is aware of the nature of the skin bumps associated with the BHD syndrome. Whatever treatment you may choose to have, new fibrofolliculomas may grow elsewhere. Removing a few fibrofolliculomas by surgical excision may be a satisfactory solution. Although your dermatologist will try to excise the fibrofolliculoma in such a way as to minimise any scar, it is impossible to cut the skin without scarring in some way, so you will always have some sort of scar.

## Cauterisation

Cauterisation uses a heated electrode to de-stroy and remove skin tissue. As with surgical treatment, this can cause scarring.

Cold cauterisation is a similar technique that uses high frequency sound waves instead of heat. This procedure minimizes bleeding.

## Radiofrequency

This is a precise technique that uses an electrode to target specific skin tissue on Different kinds of radio waves can be used, which enables greater directional control in than with other forms of treatment.

## Dermabrasion

Dermabrasion is a skin resurfacing technique that has been developed to treat facial scarring. It is a surgical procedure that may be undergone as an outpatient or that may require hospital admission. The dermatologist moves a hand held tool with an abrasive end piece over the surface of the scar causing the top-most layers of the skin to be worn away.

## Cryoablation

Cryoablation is a freezing technique used to treat surface skin lesions. The treatment can be precisely applied and leaves less scarring than traditional surgery. The cold deadens tiny nerve endings so there may be less pain as well.

## Laser Therapy

Various types of laser treatment are used for different skin types. Short pulses minimise the heating up of damaged cells, which reduces thermal injury that can lead to scarring.

Automated scanners reduce the chance of treating overlapping areas. Your dermatologist will advise you on your suitability for this treatment. Ask your GP if Laser Therapy is available to you on the NHS.

**Also available in this series:**

**[BHD Syndrome: Diagnosis Information](#)**  
**[BHD Syndrome: Lung Symptoms & Treatment](#)**