

Pseudofolliculitis Barbae (PFB)

The underlying cause of PFB is a reaction to ingrown hair(s). Ingrown hairs develop as a result of close shaving especially in those with thick dark curly hair. If one were to stop shaving for 2-5 weeks most cases would resolve. If possible it is advantageous to grow a beard to decrease the irritation induced by shaving. However, this is unfavorable for many people, as they prefer to have a clean-shaven face.

Thus, I recommend **AVOIDING** close shaving as this actually worsens the propensity for ingrown hairs to develop. Additionally **AVOID** double/triple/quadruple blade systems, which also contribute to the development of ingrown hairs. If possible it is best to use clippers on setting of 2-3 mm (for example: electric clippers of Braun, Grundig, Norelco, or Remington), or just a single blade razor (for example: Bump fighter razor). Additionally, you should use a new disposable razor blade every day.

Other options for hair removal include depilatories (for example: Nair) which accomplish hair removal without the use of a razor, however these should not be used more than every 48 to 72 hours due to the potential development of irritations and/or chemical burns.

While electrolysis can be useful for unwanted hair, it is actually not recommended in PFB due to the presence of curly hairs, which make electrolysis ineffective as well as entertain the possibility of residual pigment changes.

Laser hair removal can be useful to aid in preventing the development of thick ingrown hairs and offers “long term” results.

Topical treatments that may be prescribed for you include a mild topical steroid, a topical antibiotic, and a topical retinoid. These will be given upon clinical discretion. Additionally, occasionally chemical peels can be used to aid in preventing hairs from becoming entrapped.