

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PSORIASIS

In the Clinic
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What Is Psoriasis?

- Psoriasis is a skin condition that can also affect your joints. You can get psoriasis when your immune system is overactive and causes your skin cells to grow too quickly.
- Psoriasis causes itchy, scaly patches of skin that usually show up on your elbows, knees, lower back, and scalp; however, they can appear anywhere on your body.
- Stiffness, pain, swelling, and tenderness around joints (e.g., elbows, knees) may also occur.
- Psoriasis can be inherited, which means you are more likely to have psoriasis if one or both of your parents have it.
- There are a few different types of psoriasis. Ask your doctor what type you have.

What Are the Symptoms?

- Red patches of skin with silvery-white scales
- Dry, cracked skin
- Itching, burning, and soreness on your skin
- Thick or ridged nails
- Swollen, stiff, or painful joints

How Is It Diagnosed?

Your doctor will ask you questions about your health and health history. He or she will also check your skin for signs of psoriasis.

How Is It Treated?

- You may be prescribed a cream to apply to the affected patches of skin.
- If you have severe psoriasis, you might be prescribed one or more oral medicines; sometimes this medicine is given by injection.
- Some people might need a treatment called phototherapy to help their psoriasis. This is when a special light is shined on your skin to help your psoriasis heal.
- Your doctor might refer you to a dermatologist for treatment.
- You and your doctor should work together to decide which treatment is best for you based on your symptoms and how much the psoriasis affects your quality of life.

What Are the Triggers?

The symptoms of psoriasis may come and go throughout your life. The following can trigger a psoriasis flare-up:



- HIV
- A cold
- Strep throat
- Stress
- Vaccination
- Tattooing
- Sunburn
- Certain medicines, like lithium, interferon, medicines for malaria, beta-blockers, and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (also called "NSAIDs"; examples include Motrin and Advil), and stopping use of corticosteroids
- Cold weather

What Can I Do to Feel Better at Home?

- Try to identify triggers and avoid them.
- Use a rich, unscented cream or lotion on your skin.
- Because smoking, alcohol use, and obesity can make psoriasis worse, work with your doctor to develop a plan to quit smoking, reduce alcohol use, and maintain a healthy body weight.

Questions for My Doctor

- Will ointment be enough to help my psoriasis?
- Do I have to worry about any other long-term problems?
- What caused my psoriasis?
- What is the best treatment for my psoriasis?
- What else can I do to reduce itching?
- Do I have to change the soaps and lotions I use? If so, what are the best kinds?
- Should I see a dermatologist?

For More Information



National Psoriasis Foundation
www.psoriasis.org
American Academy of Dermatology
www.aad.org/public/diseases/scaly-skin/psoriasis