

PSORIASIS 101

What is World Psoriasis Day?

World Psoriasis Day is held on October 29th. The day is dedicated to people who suffer from the skin condition, psoriasis.

What is psoriasis?

Psoriasis is a skin disease that causes raised, red patches with silvery scales. These patches can appear on any location on the skin. Commonly, patches are found on the scalp, around the elbows, and on the knees. Itchiness, burning or stinging sensations can occur along with the patches.

About 10% to 20% of people with this disease may develop psoriatic arthritis. This form of arthritis is different from others, like osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis. It is also considered to be related to the underlying problem of psoriasis. Additionally, this disease has been associated with other health conditions. These include diabetes, heart diseases, and depression.

Who is at risk?

According to the National Psoriasis Foundation, anyone can get psoriasis:

- 3% of the U.S. population is affected
- Men and women develop the condition equally
- 3.6% of Caucasians have psoriasis, compared to 1.9% of African-Americans
- Develops at any age, but common in those between 15 and 35 years
- About 10% of those affected are less than 10 years of age

How do I get psoriasis?

The exact cause of the disorder is unknown, but it has been related with the immune system and genetics. Psoriasis usually occurs when the part of the body's own immune system becomes overactive. The skin growth cycle speeds up, which leads to buildup of patches or lesions. Psoriasis is NOT contagious. Thus, you cannot catch psoriasis from contact with someone who has it.

How am I diagnosed?

Unfortunately, there are no specific tests or tools to diagnose this condition. A dermatologist (skin doctor) or other healthcare provider can examine the appearance of the skin and make the diagnosis.

How severe is the condition?

Psoriasis can be mild, moderate or severe based on how much surface area is affected:

| | |
|----------|--------------------------------------|
| Mild | covers less than 3% of the body |
| Moderate | covers between 3% to 10% of the body |
| Severe | covers more than 10% of the body |

What treatment options are available?

Treatment for psoriasis can vary based on the response and severity. It is very important to speak with your doctor regarding specific treatment options:

- Topical medications (i.e., ointment or creams)
- Systemic medications (i.e., oral, injectable, or intravenous medications)
- Light therapy (treating the affected area with ultraviolet light; should be completed on a regular basis and under medical supervision)

For more information or assistance, please visit the National Psoriasis Foundation website:

www.psoriasis.org

For informational purposes only; not meant to supersede the advice of a physician.
If you have questions regarding this information, please consult your medical professional.