

Psoriasis

Overview:

- Psoriasis is a chronic skin condition characterized by itchy red patches and silvery scales.
- The cause of psoriasis is still unknown, but it's thought to be related to immune system problems and genetics.
- Some of the most common symptoms of psoriasis are dry skin and the formation of a thick layer of skin.
- There is no cure for psoriasis, but the symptoms can be managed.
- There is no known way to prevent psoriasis, but there are ways for patients to manage their condition.

Definition of Allergies:

Allergies occur when the immune system reacts to a foreign substance (such as pollen, mites, fungi, or certain foods), that doesn't normally cause a reaction in most people.

The immune system is responsible for attacking harmful substances that enter the body. However during an allergic reaction, the immune system is responding to a false alarm and instead it attacks non-harmful substances by producing antibodies (such as histamines). This is what causes symptoms of allergies to appear. People who have allergies are often sensitive to more than one substance.

Definition of Psoriasis:

Psoriasis is a chronic skin condition characterized by itchy red patches and silvery scales, and its symptoms range from mild to severe. Skin cells are normally replaced every 3 to 4 weeks, but in psoriasis this process only takes about 3 to 7 days. This means that people with psoriasis have an increased production of skin cells, resulting in the build-up of skin layers and the development of other psoriasis symptoms.

Types of Psoriasis:

There are several types of psoriasis, and it's possible to have more than one type of psoriasis at the same time. It's also possible for one type of psoriasis to develop and become more severe. **These types include:**

- **Plaque psoriasis:** Plaque psoriasis is the most common form of the disease and it appears as raised, red patches (plaques) covered with silvery scales. These patches or plaques most often show up on the scalp, knees, elbows and lower back, and they are often itchy and painful, and they can crack and bleed.
- **Guttate psoriasis:** This type primarily affects young adults and children. It is usually triggered by a bacterial infection (such as: strep throat). It is characterized by small, water-drop-shaped, scaling lesions that appear on the trunk (back, chest and abdomen), as well as the arms, legs and scalp. Guttate psoriasis can flare up on its own and it can improve on its own.
- **Inverse psoriasis:** Inverse psoriasis causes large patches of red, inflamed skin to appear in body folds, (such as: the armpits, behind the knees, between the thighs, and under the breasts), and it can affect some or all of these areas at the same time. This condition worsens with friction and sweating.

Other less common types of psoriasis include:

- **Pustular psoriasis:** Pustular psoriasis is characterized by raised bumps (blisters) that are filled with noninfectious pus. Pustular psoriasis can occur on any part of the body.
- **Erythrodermic psoriasis:** Erythrodermic psoriasis can cover the entire body with a red, peeling rash that can itch or burn intensely. Individuals

having an erythrodermic psoriasis flare should see a doctor immediately, since this form of psoriasis can be life-threatening.

Cause:

Although the main cause of psoriasis isn't fully understood, it's thought to be largely related to immune system problems and genetics.

Psoriasis triggers:

Psoriasis is typically triggered or worsened due to certain factors; these factors include:

- Injury to the skin, (such as: a cut or scrape, a bug bite, or others).
- Psychological stress.
- Infections, such as strep throat.
- Smoking.
- Some medicines (e.g. high blood pressure medications).

Risk factors:

Anyone can develop psoriasis, but there are factors that can increase the risk of developing the disease; such as:

- Family history: Having one parent with psoriasis increases your risk of getting the disease, and having two parents with psoriasis increases your risk even more.
- Viral infections (e.g. HIV) or bacterial infections (e.g. strep throat).
- Psychological stress; stress can impact the immune system.
- Obesity: Psoriasis often develops in skin creases and folds.
- Smoking: Smoking not only increases the risk of psoriasis but also may increase the severity of the disease.

Symptoms:

Psoriasis typically causes patches of skin that are dry, red and covered in silver

scales. Some people find their psoriasis causes itching or soreness. Other symptoms may appear depending on:

- The type of psoriasis you have.
- Its location on the body.
- The severity of the condition and its size.

When to see a doctor:

If you suspect that you may have psoriasis, see your doctor for an examination. Also, talk to your doctor if your psoriasis:

- Causes you discomfort and pain.
- Makes performing routine tasks difficult.
- Affects the appearance of your skin
- Leads to joint problems, (such as: pain, swelling or inability to perform daily tasks).
- It is also important to seek medical advice if your symptoms don't improve with treatment.

Complications:

- Skin plays an important role in regulating body temperature, and maintaining the balance of fluids in the body (hydration). It also acts as an important barrier against infections. However, when skin problems occur, these functions are usually affected. This can sometimes lead to heart and kidney damage.
- Flares of pustular psoriasis and erythrodermic psoriasis severely affect the entire body.
- Psoriatic arthritis.
- Emotional problems such as: low self-esteem and depression.

Diagnosis:

- Family history.

- Physical examination.
- Skin biopsy.

Treatment:

There is no cure for psoriasis, but the symptoms can be managed with certain medications depending on the type and severity of the condition as well as the location of the affected area. The doctor usually begins with prescribing simple medications and progresses to stronger medications as needed.

Psoriasis treatments are classified into 3 categories:

- Topical medication: Such as creams and ointments.
- Light therapy (phototherapy): This treatment involves exposing the skin to a certain type of ultraviolet light.
- Oral or injected medications:
More than one type may be used depending on the doctor's plan.

Prevention:

There is no known way to prevent psoriasis, but there are ways for patients to manage their condition.

Guidelines for patients suffering from psoriasis:

- It is important to take your medications as instructed by your doctor.
- Make sure to keep your skin moisturized.
- Lead a healthy lifestyle by eating nutritious foods and engaging in regular physical activity.
- Quit smoking.
- Manage psychological stress.
- Avoid psoriasis triggers as much as possible.

Frequently Asked Questions:

- **Can certain foods trigger psoriasis?**

No, this is not possible since there is no link between consuming certain foods and psoriasis.

- **Are eczema patients more likely to develop psoriasis?**

No they are not.

Misconceptions:

- **Psoriasis is contagious.**

Fact: This is not true; psoriasis can't be transmitted from one person to another.

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For further questions kindly contact us via email:

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