

# THE PROACTIVE

Volume 8

Psoriasis

August 2019

## A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



## Psoriasis

Psoriasis is a common skin condition that speeds up the life cycle of skin cells. It causes cells to build up rapidly on the surface of the skin. The extra skin cells form scales and red patches that are itchy and sometimes painful.

### //// SYMPTOMS //////////////////////////////////////

Psoriasis signs and symptoms are different for everyone. Common signs and symptoms include:

- Red patches of skin covered with thick, silvery scales
- Dry, cracked skin that may bleed
- Itching, burning, or soreness
- Thickened, pitted, or ridged nails
- Swollen and stiff joints

### GETTING THE MOST ////// Out of Treatment

Combined with medication, these 3 lifestyle changes may help ease symptoms of psoriasis and reduce flare-ups:

#### 1 A HEALTHY DIET

Losing weight and maintaining a healthy diet can go a long way toward helping ease and reduce symptoms of psoriasis. This includes eating a diet rich in omega-3 fatty acids and plants. Limit foods that may increase your inflammation, such as: red meat, refined sugars, dairy products, alcohol, and processed foods.

#### 2 MANAGE STRESS

Stress is a well-established trigger for psoriasis. Reduce stress through meditation and exercise. Connecting with others who live with psoriasis can motivate and encourage, plus offer a high level of support. A strong network gives much needed strength to cope.

#### 3 QUIT SMOKING

Studies have found smoking to be an independent risk factor for psoriasis. That means people who smoke are more likely to have psoriasis, and it can make psoriasis more severe. After quitting, a person may see a reduction in severity, the amount of flares, and a better response to treatment.

Psoriasis patches can range from a few spots of dandruff-like scaling to major eruptions that cover large areas.

Most types of psoriasis go through cycles, flaring for a few weeks or months, then subsiding for a time or even going into complete remission.

### ////// TYPES //////////////////////////////////////

There are several types of psoriasis:

- **Plaque** – (most common form) causes dry, raised, red skin lesions (plaques) covered with silvery scales. They can occur anywhere on the body including the soft tissue inside the mouth.
- **Nail** – affects both finger and toe nails, causing pitting, abnormal growth, and discoloration.
- **Guttate** – primarily affects young adults and children, usually triggered by a bacterial infection such as strep throat.
- **Inverse** – affects the skin in the armpits, groin, under the breasts, and around the genitals. Causes smooth patches of red, inflamed skin that worsen with friction and sweating.
- **Pustular** – occurs in widespread patches or in smaller areas on hands, feet, or fingertips and can also cause fever, chills, severe itching, and diarrhea. This type develops quickly, with pus-filled blisters appearing just hours after skin becomes red and tender. The blisters may come and go frequently.
- **Erythrodermic** – (least common form) covers the entire body with a red, peeling rash that can itch or burn intensely.
- **Psoriatic** – causes swollen, painful joints that are typical of arthritis in addition to inflamed, scaly skin.

### ////// CAUSES //////////////////////////////////////

The cause of psoriasis isn't fully understood, but it's thought to be related to an immune system problem with T cells and other white blood cells, called neutrophils, in your body.

T cells normally travel through the body to defend against foreign substances. With psoriasis, the T cells attack healthy skin cells by mistake. Those overactive T cells also trigger increased production of healthy skin cells, especially neutrophils.

The process becomes an ongoing cycle in which new skin cells move to the outermost layer of skin too quickly – in days rather than weeks. Skin cells build up in thick, scaly patches on the skin's surface, continuing until treatment stops the cycle.

### ////// TREATMENT //////////////////////////////////////

While there's no cure for psoriasis, treatment can stop skin cells from growing so quickly, which reduces inflammation and the formation of patches of dry, raised, red skin (plaques). Treatment plans are based on the severity of the psoriasis and its location on the body.

Having a basic understanding of available treatments can help you have a better conversation with your doctor. Medication and treatment may include:

- Topical Creams and Ointments
- Light Therapy
- Pills
- Injections

Source: [www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org)