

August Topic: Psoriasis

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HEALTHCARE CLINIC HOURS:

Monday-Wednesday, Friday

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Thursday

9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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Monday-Wednesday, Friday

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August is Psoriasis Awareness Month!

What is Psoriasis?^{1,2}

Psoriasis is a common, long-lasting skin condition that changes the life cycle of skin cells. It is an autoimmune disease, meaning that the immune system sends out incorrect signals that speed up the growth cycle of skin cells.

Psoriasis affects approximately 7.5 million people in the United States.

Psoriasis can occur on any part of the body. Although it mostly affects the skin and joints, it may also affect the fingernails, toenails, soft tissues of the genitals, and inside the mouth.

Psoriasis is **NOT** contagious.

Psoriasis is often associated with other serious health conditions, including diabetes, heart disease, and depression.



Psoriasis signs & symptoms:

Psoriasis signs and symptoms can vary from person to person, but may include one or more of the following:

- Red patches of skin covered with silvery scales
- Small, scaling spots (*common in children*)
- Dry, cracked skin that may bleed
- Itching, burning, or soreness
- Thickened, pitted or ridged nails
- Swollen and stiff joints



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

Psoriasis displays cyclic behavior – flaring for a few weeks or months, then subsiding for a time or even going into complete remission.

How is Psoriasis diagnosed?⁴

- A doctor usually inspects the affected area of the skin.
- Your doctor may take a piece of the affected skin and look at it under a microscope.

What triggers Psoriasis?³

- Psoriasis typically starts or worsens because of triggers that you may be able to identify and avoid
- Triggers can include:
 - Infections –
 - Strep throat
 - Skin infections
 - Injury to skin –
 - Cuts or scrapes
 - Bug bites
 - Severe sunburns
 - Stress
 - Cold weather
 - Smoking
 - Heavy alcohol consumption
 - Certain medications –
 - Lithium
 - Beta Blockers
 - Anti-malarials
 - Iodides

What is Psoriatic arthritis?^{3,4}

- Psoriatic arthritis is a complication of psoriasis that can cause joint damage and a loss of function in some joints that can be debilitating.
- Approx. 30% of people with psoriasis will eventually develop psoriatic arthritis
- It may go undiagnosed, but early diagnosis is important to avoid permanent joint damage.

What type of Psoriasis do I have?⁴

1. Plaque Psoriasis



- Most common form of psoriasis
- Appears as raised, red patches covered with a silvery white buildup of dead skin cells
- Most often show up on the scalp, knees, elbows, and lower back
- The patches or plaques are often itchy and painful, and can crack and bleed

2. Guttate Psoriasis



- Second-most common type of psoriasis (*about 10% of people with psoriasis*)
- Appears as small, dot-like lesions
- Often starts in childhood or young adulthood
- Can be triggered by a strep infection

3. Inverse Psoriasis



- Appears as bright-red lesions that are shiny and smooth
- Found in body folds (eg. behind the knee, under the arm, under breasts, or in the groin)
- Worsened by friction and sweating

4. Pustular Psoriasis



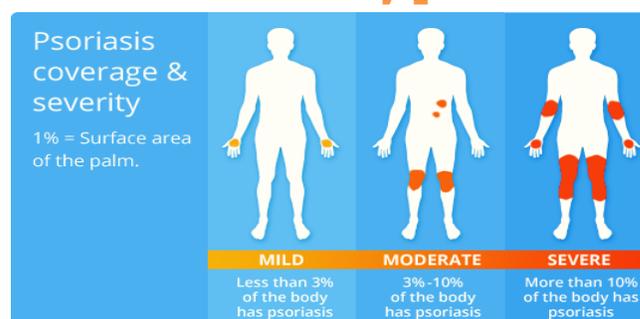
- Characterized by white blisters of noninfectious pus surrounded by red skin
- It is not an infection, nor is it contagious
- Can occur on any part of the body, but most often on the hands or feet.
- Generally develops quickly, with the blisters appearing just hours after the skin becomes red and tender

5. Erythrodermic Psoriasis



- Severe form of psoriasis; need to see a doctor right away
- Appears as widespread, fiery redness of the skin and shedding of scales in sheets, rather than smaller flakes
- This is often accompanied by severe itching and pain, increased heart rate, and fever
- Very rare, occurs in 3% of people with psoriasis
- Generally appears on people with unstable plaque psoriasis

How severe is my psoriasis?



Psoriasis Treatment Options³

Psoriasis treatments aims to:

- Stop the skin cells from growing so quickly, reducing inflammation and plaque formation.
- Remove scales and smooth the skin, especially with use of topical treatments.

Topical Treatments

Used alone creams and ointments that you apply to the skin can effectively treat mild to moderate psoriasis. For more serious psoriasis, these can be used in combination with oral medication or light therapy.

Topical Corticosteroids

- Powerful anti-inflammatory drugs most frequently prescribed for mild to moderate psoriasis.
- These agent slow cell turnover by suppressing your immune system to reduce inflammation and relieve associated itching.
- Topical corticosteroids range in strength, from mild to very strong.

Vitamin D Analogues (Dovonex, Rocaltrol)

- Synthetic forms of vitamin D to slow down the growth of skin cells.

Anthralin

- Removes the scales, making the skin smoother.
- Believed to do this by normalizing DNA activity in skin cells
- Can irritate skin and stains, therefore should only stay on your skin for a short time before washing off.

Topical Retinoids (tazarotene)

- Normalizes DNA activity in skin cells and may decrease inflammation.
- May irritate skin and cause sun sensitivity

Salicylic Acid

- Promotes sloughing of dead skin cells and reduces scaling

Coal Tar

- Reduces scaling, itching, and inflammation

Light Therapy (phototherapy)

Psoriasis treatment uses natural or artificial ultraviolet light. The simplest and easiest form of phototherapy involves exposing your skin to controlled amounts of natural sunlight. Other forms of light include use of artificial ultraviolet A (UVA) or ultraviolet B (UVB) light alone or in combination with medications.

Oral or Injected Medications

If you have severe psoriasis or it's resistant to other types of treatment, your doctor may prescribe oral or injectable medications.

Retinoids

- May reduce the production of skin cells if your severe psoriasis doesn't respond to other therapies.
- Must not be used in women planning to become pregnant due to birth defect risk

Methotrexate

- Decreases production of skin cells and suppresses inflammation. May also slow progression of psoriatic arthritis.

Cyclosporine

- Suppresses the immune system and is similar in effectiveness to methotrexate, but increases your risk for infection.

Biologics

- These injectable drugs alter the immune system by blocking interactions between certain immune system cells and particular inflammatory pathways.
- Increases risk for infection.
- Examples: Humira, Enbrel, Remicade, Stelara

References

1. Fact Sheet Library | National Psoriasis Foundation. (2015, February). Retrieved July 19, 2016, from <https://www.psoriasis.org/publications/patient-education/fact-sheets>
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3. Psoriasis. (2015, June 17). Retrieved July 19, 2016, from <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/psoriasis/basics/definition/con-20030838?p=1>
4. About Psoriasis. (n.d.). Retrieved July 19, 2016, from <https://www.psoriasis.org/about-psoriasis>



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State Wellness Center

101 S. Union Street
Montgomery, AL 36104

All active employees, covered spouses of active employees, non-Medicare retirees and covered non-Medicare spouses of retirees that use the State Employees' Health Insurance Plan (Group 13000) as their primary insurance plan are eligible for a wellness premium discount. Each wellness plan year is November 1 through October 31.

SEIB and Local Government employees along with SEIB retirees are able to use the State Wellness Center Pharmacy. The pharmacy offers various over the counter products at discounted prices and a **free medication delivery service**. Delivery can be provided to the patients located in Montgomery. Please designate which site you would like your medication delivered to, and if it is to your residence someone must be available at the home to receive the delivery.

State Wellness Center Healthcare Clinic

The SEIB clinic has a quality healthcare **TEAM** that includes nurse practitioners, an ambulatory care pharmacist, a physician, and nurses who work closely together to take care of your health and wellness needs.

Services Include:

- Treat minor illnesses
- Provide health education & monitoring
- Check health progress between appointments
- Share information with your physician
- Monitor efficacy & safety of every medication
- Evaluate out of pocket medication expense
- Smoking cessation & weight loss services
- Diabetes education program
- Immunizations & injectable medications
- Develop a personalized medication plan
- Monitor control of chronic illnesses
- Medication check-ups
- Medication therapy management