# How Does Psoriasis Develop?

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## Psoriasis Development and Progression

Each person with psoriasis will experience in his/her unique way.

Some people will have minor skin irritations that feel itchy and bleed easily, while other people may have extensive skin lesions with frequent flare-ups. Others may also develop arthritis psoriasis, which can be mild or turn into a disabling joint disease, with significant swelling and pain.

The exact cause that triggers the development of psoriasis is not known.

Scientists agree that it is an autoimmune condition, where the immune system is overactive and mistakenly triggered causing skin inflammation and increased speed of the growth cycle in skin cells.

As a result, the skin cells build up, leading to the characteristic skin patches, as well as skin inflammation. Genetics may also play a role, as you have an increased risk to develop psoriasis if you have other family members affected by this condition as well.

First symptoms occur during early adulthood (15-25 years of age), but some people will develop psoriasis later in life. When it comes to gender, psoriasis does not discriminate, as occurs nearly equally in men and women.

There are five distinctive forms of psoriasis:

- **Plaque psoriasis** is the most common form, manifested with those typical inflamed plaques covered with silvery scales.
- **Guttate psoriasis** looks different: the lesions are smaller, round, and often associated with strep throat or other infections.
- **Pustular psoriasis** will involve pus filled skin lesions which can be quite painful.
- **Inverse psoriasis** is characterized by severe inflammation, redness and scales in certain body areas (underarms, or groins).
- **Erythrodermic psoriasis** is a less common form of psoriasis which can affect large areas of the body; the skin is extremely red and painful, looks as if it has been burn. This form can be life threatening, and requires treatment as soon as possible.

The severity of skin lesions varies from person to person. Most people will have the mild form which means less than 3% of the skin is affected by lesions (as a rule of thumb, the surface of your palm equals 1% of the skin surface). In more severe cases, the lesions may affect between 3-10% and even more than 10% of the skin surface.

Psoriasis is a chronic condition, but this doesn’t mean that will necessarily progress over time. Some individuals will have minor skin irritations and possibly a flare-up once in a while. Others may experience frequent flare-ups, and later on in life the arthritis (psoriatic arthritis is diagnosed in about 30% of psoriasis sufferers).

**Psoriasis Management/Flare-Up Prevention**

Regardless of the form of psoriasis you have, you need to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

Avoid the triggers such as stress, allergies, diet, infections, and injuries. Use green products for personal hygiene and household cleaners, as fragrances and artificial chemicals can irritate your skin. Keep your skin moist and avoid sunburns. Make sure you follow the treatment as prescribed by your doctor.