Spotting the Signs of Plaque Psoriasis

by LARA WYATT

What is Plaque Psoriasis?

Psoriasis is one of those conditions that can present itself in many forms. Plaque psoriasis is just one of those forms, and it can actually look very different in every situation. It occurs when your skin cells grow at an unusually fast rate, and the dead cells form plaque-like sections of psoriasis on the surface of your skin.

What Does Plaque Psoriasis Look Like?

It can appear in a wide range of forms. You've got large plaque psoriasis, small plaque psoriasis, linear psoriasis, elephantine psoriasis, plus plenty more. The most common types, however, are small and large plaque psoriasis:

- Small plaque psoriasis is, as the name would suggest, a lot smaller in size, with plaques being a lot thinner and also anywhere from only a few millimeters in size, as opposed to the 10 centimeters-plus sizing of large plaque psoriasis. It's also considered milder than other types of psoriasis, as it is generally finer, and the color is less intense.
- Large plaque psoriasis usually appears in oval shapes and can be anywhere from 10 centimeters or more in size. The way the plaque forms tends to differ for everyone — many will find that their plaques can be quite thick and red or silver, while others may have thinner plaques.

Another feature of plaque psoriasis is flaking. The skin in the affected areas is generated at a faster than normal rate, so flakes of skin tend to shed as the new layers of skin are produced. These plaques can be quite uncomfortable, especially if you tend to get psoriasis in joint areas where they will be stretched a lot.

Where Will It Appear?

Often, plaque psoriasis will appear on your body in places like your elbows, your knees, or your back. These lesions are not picky though — they may appear anywhere on your body. It's also quite common for plaque psoriasis to appear on your scalp, and even your upper body, palms and feet.

On a personal level, I have found that by making sure I moisturize the places on my body I know are susceptible to psoriasis flare-ups, I can nip any flare-ups in the bud before they get out of control.

If you know of the areas on your body that you mainly get psoriasis, I would definitely advocate for this preventative measure.

Why Do People Get It?

The reasons behind why people get psoriasis is not an easy diagnosis.

Many factors contribute to why the autoimmune condition is caused, including environmental conditions or

hereditary factors. Psoriasis is known to run in families, even if it might skip a generation or two.

A psoriasis flare-up is common if you go through a stressful experience. It’s also known to appear if you end up with strep throat.

Being an autoimmune condition, it makes sense that if your throat is sore, as a result of an infection, your body is already running overtime trying to get rid of the infection, and it could throw your body into overdrive on the skin production front — but I am no doctor!

Stress is also a huge factor — even if you do not feel emotionally stressed, your body tends to know more about how much strain you are putting it through before you are mentally aware.

Psoriasis could be a way of your body letting you know that you are putting a little too much strain on it and to take some time out. An enforced break time never hurt anyone, surely!

How to Treat Plaque Psoriasis

While there is not a cure for plaque psoriasis, there are plenty of ways to treat plaque psoriasis flare-ups and make it easier to manage. You could try a variety of topical treatments (as prescribed by your doctor):

- Topical corticosteroids are good for mild psoriasis flare-ups, as they help to reduce inflammation, and they can be prescribed in different strengths for different flare-ups.
- Vitamin D treatments can also help as they can help to slow down the generation of skin cells, slowing down the rate at which new layers of the plaque psoriasis form at.
- A non-prescription option is coal tar, which helps in reducing itch, redness, scaling and pain associated with psoriasis.
- Moisturize like crazy. The more you moisturize, the less painful your psoriasis flare-up will be. It will also reduce the itch, pain and scaling.

There are also a variety of alternative treatments, including oral medication, light therapy, or natural methods to consider. There’s no one size fits all option for treating your psoriasis, so it is worth experimenting with all the options out there to find what could work for you.