5 Types of Psoriasis You Should Know About

by LARA WYATT

Types of Psoriasis

Psoriasis is an autoimmune condition that affects the skin. It can cause inflammation and scaly skin due to the fast regeneration of skin cells. There's a variety of types of psoriasis that look different and usually affect different parts of your body. Learn about five types of psoriasis, what they look like and how you can try to treat them.

Plaque Psoriasis

Plaque psoriasis is the most common type of psoriasis. It can affect any part of the body, but often it makes an appearance on your back, elbows, knees, or scalp. Plaque psoriasis looks like red, dry patches with flaky skin. These patches can sometimes have what appears to be a silver sheen on the top. They can also be small (which is often how they appear in children), or the patches can appear to blend together as one large patch. With plaque psoriasis, patches can be itchy or painful, especially when they occur in areas that bend, like the back of the neck or in elbow and knee creases.

With treatment, and depending on the severity, plaque psoriasis can clear in a few days or a few weeks. This is considered going into remission, but plaque psoriasis can come back if your body is triggered again in the future.

Guttate Psoriasis

A less common form of psoriasis is guttate psoriasis. This one appears as small drop-like looking red patches, generally on your stomach, chest, arms and legs. It can spread to cover other areas of your body and is described using three types of severity: mild, moderate and severe. Mild guttate psoriasis tends to cover less than 3% of your body, moderate covers up to 10% of your body, and severe covers anywhere over 10% of your body. Guttate psoriasis is often connected with infections. If someone suffers from an infection like strep throat, guttate psoriasis may occur due to the weakened immune system at this time.

Guttate psoriasis can clear up in around three weeks, but in some cases it can go on to become plaque psoriasis.

Inverse Psoriasis

Inverse psoriasis appears more like a smooth silvery or red patch and it can often feature sores that can be filled with pus. It tends to occur in skin folds under breasts, under arms or in your groin area. Moisture tends to make inverse psoriasis worse, which explains why it often appears in areas that get warmer and sweatier like armpits and in the groin area. Inverse psoriasis is also known as intertriginous psoriasis, or even hidden psoriasis, as it tends to appear in areas hidden by skin folds.

Pustular Psoriasis

This form of psoriasis is far rarer. The skin in affected areas goes red, and small raised bumps appear on the surface. These bumps tend to be filled with a white pus-like liquid. Pustular psoriasis tends to appear mainly on your upper body, as well as arms and legs. Often, the pustules will dry out and new pustules will appear on the red patch of skin where the previous pustules were. The difference with pustular psoriasis is that it can come with other symptoms that don't affect the skin, like headaches, joint pain and even nausea. Pustular psoriasis is often triggered by coming off corticosteroids suddenly or the use of specific types of drugs, and sometimes it can be triggered by another infection your body is fighting.

Erythrodermic Psoriasis

Erythrodermic psoriasis is considered as one of the more intense or severe forms of psoriasis. It tends to take over much of the surface of a person's body, with red lesions that have a severe level of itching and burning. Another distinguishing feature of erythrodermic psoriasis is that a person's skin can also shed, with larger sheets likely to shed. Suffering from erythrodermic psoriasis can also cause a person's body to suffer from other conditions like an increased heart rate, fluid-retention related swelling, and the inability to regulate temperature.

Triggers

It's hard to pinpoint exactly what causes someone to suffer from these types of psoriasis. Common triggers are thought to be stress, suffering from an infection that weakens the immune system (like strep throat), injuries to the skin (like sunburn) and potentially the weather or your diet. Other factors that may contribute to someone developing psoriasis are alcohol consumption and smoking.

Treatments for Psoriasis

There are many treatment options to help ease the symptoms of psoriasis. They range from medicinal ointments to natural treatments. Some common medicinal treatments include hydrocortisone or other topical steroid ointments, and natural treatments include coal tar ointments, coconut oil, aloe vera and even kawakawa balms. Another treatment that can be considered to treat psoriasis is ultraviolet-B light (UV-B light). There are also more intensive treatment options available, but these are usually only used on patients with severe psoriasis that is unresponsive to other treatments. But remember, the main thing to do to help ease the itch and pain caused by psoriasis, and to prevent the skin from drying up and cracking, is to keep your skin moisturized.