Genital Psoriasis

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Coping With Genital Psoriasis

Psoriasis can affect any part of the body, including the genitals. It is quite common in psoriasis suffers - about one fourth to one third of them may experience genital psoriasis. The major problem is that most people don't seek medical advice, as it feels embarrassing or depressing. The lesions also may look different from those found on the elbows or knees, and may also be ignored. Yet, with the right treatment, this condition can be successfully treated in a short period of time.

About Genital Psoriasis

This condition affects both women and men, and the lesions will be located in the genital area, or beyond that. In men it may affect the penis, scrotum, and the buttocks, while in women can be seen on the vulva, around the buttocks, or the skin folds between the thigh and abdomen.

The lesions often don't look like the typical psoriatic plaques - with a well defined contour, red patches covered by silvery scales. The genital psoriasis tends to be less flaky, the color less intense, and perhaps more sensitive and itchy. The lesions may come and go, and often there are no problems for a long period of time.

Can You Have Sex with Genital Psoriasis?

Psoriasis is not contagious and does not influence the sex drive - so the answer is yes; it is ok to have sex, unless the lesions are painful. If you feel embarrassed because how the skin looks, you should talk to your partner about it.

Managing Symptoms

Be careful with the clothes you wear, as they can irritate your skin. Avoid tight underwear, skirts or pants, made of synthetic material. Wearing a layer of silk or soft, 100% cotton underneath problem garments could also help. If you sweat a lot, you should change your undergarments more often, to avoid excessive moisture.

Most shower gels and creams have several ingredients (i.e. fragrances, additives, colors) that can irritate your skin. Use instead mild cleansers, or even plain water to wash your skin. Petroleum jelly keeps the skin soft, and moist.

Avoid triggers. The same triggers that cause psoriasis in other places, can also cause skin lesions in the genital area- this includes stress, obesity, skin injuries (including sunburn), infections (including yeast infections), cold or dry air, some prescription drugs (i.e. lithium, beta blockers), as well as alcohol and smoking

Diet is important, because a balanced diet will keep your skin healthy and your immune system strong. Choose more often fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean meats and fish. Avoid alcohol and processed foods

(which contain high amounts of simple sugars, saturated fats and artificial additives). You may also want to try a gluten free diet, as some people found great improvements while removing gluten from the diet.

Your doctor may recommend some drugs, use them as directed. Steroids are controversial, but safer alternatives are available - for example vitamin D derivate (particularly helpful for psoriasis of the penis), tacrolimus and pimecrolimus.

Among natural supplements, avocado and vitamin B12 cream, as well as aloe 0.5% cream showed the most benefits, and have an excellent safety profile as well.