



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

HOCKING COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

350 State Route 664 North ~ Logan, Ohio 43138
Phone 740-385-3030 Fax 740-385-2252

Psoriasis is an autoimmune disorder in which the body produces skin cells at an accelerated rate. This causes raised, red, scaly patches to form on the skin. These affected areas are often itchy and painful. Psoriasis can develop anywhere on the body however, it typically affects the outsides of elbows, knees or scalp. This condition is much more common than people may think but, is NOT contagious. Anyone can develop psoriasis however, it tends to occur more in adults than in children.

Usually, a physician can diagnose psoriasis through a visual examination of the affected skin. A doctor may prescribe systemic medication taken orally or by injection if the psoriasis is considered moderate to severe. Topical steroids and moisturizers might also be prescribed for mild to moderate psoriasis. UV light also seems to be effective when treating certain outbreaks. Phototherapy or light therapy may be done in a doctor's office to help with treatment.

As if having psoriasis isn't bothersome enough, there is another condition that individuals with psoriasis should watch for. This condition is called psoriatic arthritis. Up to about thirty percent of people with psoriasis also develop psoriatic arthritis. This condition causes pain, stiffness and swelling in and around the joints. This most commonly presents between the ages of thirty and fifty. However, it can occur at any time. Genetics, environmental factors and the immune system all seem to play a role in the onset of the condition.

There are several factors in which may aggravate psoriasis or "trigger" a flare up. Stress can cause a flare up or aggravate an existing one. It is important for individuals with psoriasis to practice relaxation techniques and stress reduction. Injury to the skin from puncture wounds, sunburns or scratches can also trigger a psoriasis flare up. Certain medications are also aggravating for psoriasis sufferers. An individual with psoriasis should talk to his/her doctor before taking medications such as: Lithium, antimalarial drugs, Inderal, quinidine or indomethacin. Lastly, some infections can cause a flare up of psoriasis as well. Psoriasis sufferers may experience flare ups following an earache, bronchitis, tonsillitis or a respiratory infection. Strep throat is greatly associated with a form of psoriasis in children.

Talk to your doctor if you think you may have psoriasis or any changes in your skin. Psoriasis can spread to other areas on the skin and doesn't typically get better on its own.