

Psoriasis

What is psoriasis?

Psoriasis (sore-EYE-uh-sis) is a skin problem that causes a rash with thick, scaly patches. It can also cause problems in the joints and changes in the nails. Psoriasis can run in families. It can start after an illness or injury to the skin. The cause of psoriasis is not known. You cannot catch it from someone else.

What can I do to help my psoriasis?

A healthy lifestyle can help. This means regular exercise, plenty of rest, a healthy diet, and reducing stress. Alcohol and tobacco use can make psoriasis worse. Spending some time in the sun (about 30 minutes or less) tends to help.

Keep your skin moisturized to prevent drying and cracking. Apply a moisturizer just after bathing while the skin is still damp. Bathing too often can dry out your skin. Warm water is better than hot water. Do not scratch or scrub your skin.

Are there medicines that can help?

There are different kinds of medicine for psoriasis. The kind your doctor prescribes is based on how bad your psoriasis is. Some medicines are creams or lotions that you rub onto your skin. There are also pills that people

with more severe psoriasis can take. People with very bad psoriasis may need to get shots.

Your doctor may recommend phototherapy in addition to medicines. This involves exposing your skin to special lights.

Where can I get more information?

Your doctor

AAFP's Patient Education Resource

Website: <http://familydoctor.org/199.xml>

The National Psoriasis Foundation

Telephone: 1-800-723-9166

Website: <http://www.psoriasis.org>

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Notes:

This handout is provided to you by your family doctor and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Other health-related information is available from the AAFP online at <http://familydoctor.org>.

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