

Pityriasis Rosea

What is pityriasis rosea?

Pityriasis rosea (pit-ih-RYE-uh-sis ROW-zee-uh) is a scaly, reddish-pink skin rash that's common in children and young adults. If you get it, you might feel like you have a cold at first. Then a scaly red spot might appear on your back or stomach. Smaller spots will develop on your body days to weeks later. The rash may itch badly. If it is on your back, it may be in the shape of a Christmas tree.

What causes it?

No one knows for sure. Some doctors think it might be caused by a virus or germ. Certain medicines also can cause it. You can't get it from other people, and you can't spread it to others.

How long does it last?

It usually lasts one to three months. Let your doctor know if the rash or itching lasts longer than three months.

How is it treated?

The rash usually goes away on its own. Nothing can cure it, but medicine can help the itching. Your doctor might want you to take antihistamine pills or use a steroid or zinc oxide cream. Some people who get this rash have to take steroid pills. If the rash is very bad, your doctor might prescribe an antiviral medicine to help with your symptoms.

Where can I get more information?

Your doctor

AAFP's Patient Information Resource

<https://familydoctor.org/condition/pityriasis-rosea/>

January 2018



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
FAMILY PHYSICIANS

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>.

This information provides a general overview and may not apply to everyone. Talk to your family doctor to find out if this information applies to you and to get more information on this subject. Copyright © 2018 American Academy of Family Physicians. Individuals may photocopy this material for their own personal reference, and physicians may photocopy for use with their own patients. Written permission is required for all other uses, including electronic uses.