

Psoriatic Arthritis

Fast Facts:

- Psoriatic arthritis can occur in people without skin disease, mainly in those who have relatives with psoriasis.
- Physical activity helps keep joints moving.
- Early diagnosis is important to avoid joint damage.

What is Psoriatic Arthritis?

- Psoriasis is a disease in which scaly red and white patches develop on the skin. This is due to the body's immune system attacking the skin.
- Some people with psoriasis can also develop psoriatic arthritis. When the immune system attacks the joints this can cause joint swelling.
- Psoriatic arthritis can affect any joint in the body.
- Psoriatic arthritis in the spine is called spondylitis.
- Psoriatic arthritis may cause tender spots where tendons and ligaments connect to bones.

What causes Psoriatic Arthritis?

- The exact cause is not known. 40% of people with this have a family member with psoriasis or arthritis.
- Psoriatic arthritis usually starts between the ages of 30 to 50, but can also begin in childhood.
- Men and women can both be at risk to get the disease.

How is Psoriatic Arthritis Diagnosed?

- A physical exam is needed to diagnose symptoms. The symptoms include warmth, swelling, and pain in the joints as well as changes in the skin and nails.
- X-rays of the joints are taken to look for damage.
- Blood tests may be done to rule out other types of arthritis.

How is Psoriatic Arthritis Treated?

- The goal of treatment is to improve symptoms, make daily activities better, and slow the disease. No single treatment works for all patients.
- Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen or naproxen are used as first treatment.
- Treatment with disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs) should be started if NSAIDs are not helping.
- Common DMARDs include sulfasalazine, methotrexate, cyclosporine, leflunomide, hydroxychloroquine, and azathioprine.

Points to Remember:

- Newer treatments are effective and help improve the disease.

- Psoriatic arthritis is a chronic arthritis that may be mild, with occasional “or constant flare” ups and can cause joint damage if not treated.

For Additional Information:

- The Arthritis Foundation – www.arthritis.org
- [The Psoriasis Foundation – www.psoriasis.org](http://www.psoriasis.org)
- National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin – www.niams.nih.gov