

Psoriasis (PS)

What is PS?

- PS is an immune disease that causes red, raised, scaly patches on the skin.
- PS often affects the elbows, knees, or scalp, but can occur in any location.
- There are five different types of PS: plaque, guttate, inverse, pustular, and erythrodermic.

What causes PS?

- The exact cause isn't known. Common triggers include stress, injury to skin, medications, and infection.
- PS may increase your risk for diabetes, heart disease, depression, and other immune diseases, such as psoriatic arthritis.
- You are more likely to get PS if you have a family member who has it.
- PS can occur in men and women at any age, but usually starts between the ages of 15 and 35.

How is PS diagnosed?

- Your doctor will do a physical exam to look for symptoms. PS symptoms include red, raised, scaly patches of skin that may sting, itch, burn, or feel painful, swollen, or hot.
- There are no specific blood tests to diagnose PS.
- Your doctor may do a biopsy of the affected skin to compare it to your normal skin.

How is PS treated?

- There is no cure for PS.
- The goal is to improve symptoms and slow the disease. No single treatment works for all people.
- The first line treatment for PS is usually topical steroids.
- Next choices may include methotrexate, biologics, and newer treatments, such as apremilast (Otezla).

Fast facts

- PS is not contagious and is not something you can “catch” from others.
- There are five types of PS: plaque, guttate, inverse, pustular, and erythrodermic.
- PS is a life-long disease for which there are many treatment options.

Points to remember

- Newer treatments are effective and may help improve the disease.
- PS can be hard to diagnose because it looks like other skin diseases.
- Ask your doctor for information on support groups. These can help some cope with the disease better.

For additional information

- National Psoriasis Foundation – www.psoriasis.org
- National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin – www.niams.nih.gov