

Psoriasis

What is it?

Psoriasis is a type of skin condition that usually appears as an elevated round or oval patch of skin. This patch has a thick silvery scale and sits on a reddish inflamed base. It is not usually itchy.

Psoriasis can also affect your nails and joints. When psoriasis affects joints, it can cause swelling and stiffness.

The cause of psoriasis is unknown, but it is often hereditary and is somehow linked to the immune system.

Psoriasis is not infectious.

What will my GP do now?

Your GP will explain more about psoriasis and give you some information on known triggers, such as:

- Certain infections (like strep throat)
- Medications
- Stress
- Lifestyle factors like smoking, poor diet, and lack of exercise

Your GP will also give you general advice about how to take care of your skin (see 'What can I do?').

Your treatment will depend on the type and location of your psoriasis. Treatment may include agents such as:

- Short term topical steroids
- Calcipotriol (Vitamin D)
- Coal tar

Your GP may refer you to a specialist if your psoriasis is severe, or you have joint pain and stiffness.

What will my GP do in the future?

Your GP may want to see you again to check how your treatment is going.

When you see your GP again, they may:

- Change your treatment if it hasn't been working well
- Refer you to a dermatologist

What can I do?

There's a lot you can do to help your skin and your overall health and wellbeing. As well as following your GP's instructions, you can:

- Keep your skin well moisturised
- Use QV or Cetaphil moisturising creams to help soften and soothe skin, reducing cracking and dryness
- Avoid hot showers
- Use aqueous cream as a soap substitute, but not as a moisturiser
- Limit sun exposure
- Avoid scratching or rubbing
- Avoid applying too much pressure to affected skin (such as kneeling with psoriasis of your knees)
- Eat a healthy diet
- Get active and exercise regularly

Psoriasis

What supports are available?

Liverpool Hospital Dermatology Department

The Liverpool Hospital Dermatology Department provides a broad range of skin services with specialist dermatologists. With staff specialising in common and rare skin diseases, the team offer treatment for all ages, from newborns to the elderly and pregnant women. Ask your GP for a referral.

Private clinics

Private specialist clinics are available in the South Western Sydney Health District. Ask your GP for a referral.

What questions could I ask my doctor?



Do I need to use any creams?

What creams should I avoid?

Do I need medication?

What are the side effects of my medication?

What symptoms should I look out for?

What are the likely triggers of psoriasis?

How can I best look after my skin?

Do I need to see a specialist?

Where can I learn more?

- **British Association of Dermatologists** – psoriasis: bad.org.uk
- **British Association of Dermatologists** – topical treatments for psoriasis: bad.org.uk
- **British Association of Dermatologists** – treatments for moderate or severe psoriasis: bad.org.uk
- **Healthdirect** – psoriasis: healthdirect.gov.au
- **Better Health Channel** – psoriasis: betterhealth.vic.gov.au
- **Cleveland Clinic** - Emollients: my.clevelandclinic.org

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

Health Resource Directory factsheets are endorsed by South Western Sydney PHN's Community Advisory Committee and local GPs

phn
SOUTH WESTERN
SYDNEY

An Australian Government Initiative