### Fast Facts

**Psoriasis**

- Condition that occurs when the life cycle of the skin cells speeds up resulting in them rapidly building up on the surface
- Cause is unknown, but thought to be related to a problem with the person’s immune system that is triggered by environmental factors
  - Immune system has many different white blood cells. One type, T cells, normally move throughout the body protecting you from foreign objects, like viruses or bacteria
  - If you have psoriasis, T cells attack healthy skin by mistake, which activates an increase in healthy skin cell production, neutrophils (another type of white blood cell) and more T cells.
  - Creates an ongoing cycle, which results in the new skin cells moving to the outermost layer of skin too soon (in days rather than weeks)
  - Can occur anywhere on your body and be small or large in size
  - Several types
  - Can go through cycles where it flares up for a few weeks/months and then subsides for a period of time (some individuals experience complete remission)

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| - Thick, silvery scales on the skin surface  
- Redness to the area  
- Dry/cracked skin that bleeds  
- Itching/burning/soreness to the area  
- Thickened/pitted/ridged nails  
- Swollen/stiff joints | **Goal**: Reduce inflammation and clear the skin  
**Topical medications**:  
- Topical corticosteroids  
- Vitamin D analogues  
- Topical retinoids  
- Calcineurin inhibitors  
- Salicylic acid  
- Coal tar  
- Moisturizers  
**Light therapy**:  
- Sunlight  
- Broadband ultraviolet B (UVB)  
- Narrow band UVB  
- Goeckerman therapy  
- Psoralen plus ultraviolet A (PUVA)  
**Systemic medications**:  
- Retinoids  
- Methotrexate  
- Cyclosporine  
- Drugs that alter your immune system (or biologics) | **Manage flare ups**:  
- Figure out triggers and avoid them  
- Take a daily bath using lukewarm water and mild soaps (adding bath oil, colloidal oatmeal or Epsom salts can provide added relief)  
- Apply a heavy, ointment-based moisturizer after the bath while skin is still moist  
- If you live in an area that experiences cold, dry weather, you’ll need to apply moisturizer several times a day  
- Expose affected areas to sunlight for brief periods (clear this with your doctor first and apply sunscreen to the rest of your skin)  
- Avoid drinking alcohol and, if you do drink, don’t drink a lot  
- If you’re feeling self-conscious, you can cover it up with cosmetic products (test the products on your skin first and to not use them on any open sores) |

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