

## HEALTH AWARENESS DEPOT FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST



*Every day you do one of two things:  
Build health or produce disease in yourself. - Adelle Davis*

### August is Psoriasis Awareness Month

The summer has flown by. Now it is August and Psoriasis Awareness Month is upon us. How much do you know about psoriasis? How many people have it? What causes psoriasis? How is it treated? What are the emotional impacts of psoriasis? How many people do you know with psoriasis?

#### What is Psoriasis?

Psoriasis is a chronic, non-contagious, genetic autoimmune disease that appears on the skin in red, scaly patches that itch, crack and bleed. Psoriasis is the most prevalent autoimmune disease affecting many people globally. It occurs when the immune system sends out faulty signals resulting in painful red, scaly patches on the skin that bleed and itch. Psoriasis is not a contagious disease.

Psoriasis has been linked to other serious conditions including psoriatic arthritis, cardiovascular disease and stroke. Up to 30 percent of people with psoriasis develop psoriatic arthritis, an inflammatory type of arthritis that causes pain and swelling of the joints and tendons. People with mild psoriasis are just as likely to develop psoriatic arthritis as those with moderate to severe psoriasis.

#### What causes Psoriasis?

Genetics and the immune system play a major role in the disease. In people with psoriasis, the immune system sends out faulty signals that speed up the growth of skin cells. To develop psoriasis, a person must have a combination of the genes that cause psoriasis and be exposed to external "triggers."

#### Triggers include:

-  Stress.
-  Injury to the skin, such as a tattoo or a scrape.
-  Smoking.
-  Certain infections.

There is no cure for psoriasis, but many treatment options are available. Treatment is individualized for each person and depends on the severity of the disease, the type of psoriasis and how the person reacts to certain treatments.

## 10 Ways to Prevent Psoriasis Flare-Ups:

In addition to following your doctor's orders, there is a lot that you can do on your own to control and prevent flare-ups of psoriasis.

- ✂ Use moisturizing lotions.
- ✂ Take care of your skin and scalp.
- ✂ Avoid dry, cold weather.
- ✂ Use a humidifier. Keeping your skin moist is important, so use a humidifier during dry seasons of the year.
- ✂ Avoid medications that cause flare-ups. Drugs that are known to make psoriasis worse in some people include:
  - ✧ Lithium, used to treat psychiatric disorders.
  - ✧ Propranolol and possibly other beta-blockers, which are prescribed for heart conditions.
  - ✧ Cardioquin or Quinidex, medications for heart arrhythmias.
- ✂ Avoid scrapes, cuts, bumps, and infections.
- ✂ Limit exposure to sun.
- ✂ Decrease stress.
- ✂ Reduce alcohol intake.
- ✂ Exercise, eat right, and maintain a healthy weight.

## Psoriasis takes an emotional, physical toll:

Despite its prevalence, psoriasis is widely misunderstood. People with psoriasis often face discrimination because others incorrectly fear it is contagious. Studies show that people with psoriasis report higher levels of anxiety, embarrassment and depression. In addition to the psychological and social impact of psoriasis, psoriasis increases risk for other serious health conditions. These include heart disease, heart attack, stroke, diabetes, Crohn's disease, hypertension, obesity and depression.

## Get involved for Psoriasis Awareness Month:

If you or someone in your family or amongst your friends has psoriasis, being a part of this campaign helps to overcome Psoriasis- its challenges, breakthroughs, frustrations and achievements.

## Reference Links:

- ✂ <http://www.everydayhealth.com/columns/howard-chang-the-itch-to-beat-psoriasis/august-is-psoriasis-awareness-month/>
- ✂ <http://www.biotech-now.org/health/2012/08/august-is-psoriasis-awareness-month-psoriasis-isnt-contagious-but-awareness-is#>
- ✂ <http://www.webmd.com/skin-problems-and-treatments/psoriasis/prevent-flare-ups>

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