

What is National Psoriasis Awareness Month?

The National Psoriasis Foundation (NPF) declares August National Psoriasis Awareness Month. NPF encourages sharing resources for treating and managing psoriatic disease to empower individuals to take control of their health.

What is psoriasis?

Psoriasis is an immune-mediated disease that causes raised, red, scaly patches to appear on the skin. It usually appears on the outside of the elbows, knees, or scalp, though it can appear anywhere. Psoriasis burns, stings, and itches. Psoriasis is associated with other serious health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and depression.

How do I get psoriasis?

While the exact cause for psoriasis is unknown, we do know the immune system and genetics play major roles in its onset and development. Men and women develop psoriasis at equal rates. It often develops between the ages of 15 and 35, but can develop at any age. A psoriasis flare is typically brought on by a trigger. It is not contagious.

How is psoriasis diagnosed?

There are no tests or tools to diagnose psoriasis. A dermatologist (a doctor who specializes in skin diseases) or other health care provider usually examines the affected skin and determines if it is psoriasis. Your doctor may take a piece of the affected skin and examine it under the microscope (a *biopsy*). When biopsied, psoriasis skin looks thicker and inflamed when compared to skin with eczema.

Mobile apps

- [AAD Psoriasis](#)
- [CatchMyPain](#)
- [Skin Advocate](#)
- [Symple Symptom Tracker](#)

Tips from our docs

This month, our healthy tip is brought to you by **Kiko Torres, MD**, our Senior Medical Director.

There are five types of psoriasis. Learning more about your type of psoriasis can help you determine the best treatment option for you. The five types are:

1. **Plaque.** The most common form. It appears as raised, red patches covered with a silvery white buildup of dead skin cells. They are often itchy and painful, and they can crack and bleed.
2. **Guttate.** Appears as small, dot-like lesions. Guttate psoriasis often starts in childhood or young adulthood and can be triggered by a strep infection. It is the second-most common type of psoriasis.
3. **Inverse.** Shows up as red lesions in body folds, such as behind the knee, under the arm, or in the groin. It may appear smooth and shiny.
4. **Pustular.** Characterized by white pustules (blisters of noninfectious pus) surrounded by red skin. The pus consists of white blood cells.
5. **Erythrodermic psoriasis.** A particularly severe form that leads to widespread, fiery redness over most of the body. It can cause severe itching and pain, and cause the skin to come off in sheets. It is rare, occurring in 3 percent of people who have psoriasis during their lifetime.

If you develop a rash that doesn't go away with an over-the-counter medication, you should consider contacting your doctor.

Additional resources

- [American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association, Inc.](#)
- [American Academy of Dermatology](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [National Psoriasis Foundation](#)