

Wellness Articles

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If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

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Tips for treating psoriasis

Thursday, Oct. 29 is World Psoriasis Day.

Psoriasis (say "suh-RY-uh-sus") is a long-term skin problem that causes skin cells to grow too quickly, resulting in thick, white, silvery, or red patches of skin. They most often appear on the knees, elbows, scalp, hands, feet, or lower back.

Psoriasis is most common in adults. But children and teens can get it too.

Psoriasis isn't contagious. It can't be spread by touch from person to person. And there are many treatments that can help keep psoriasis under control.

Follow these tips to care for psoriasis:

- Use creams or lotions, baths, or soaks to keep your skin moist.
- Try short exposure to sunlight or ultraviolet (UV) light.
- Follow instructions for skin products and prescribed medicines. It may take a period of trial and error until you know which skin products or methods work best for you. For mild symptoms of psoriasis, some [over-the-counter](#) medicines, such as aloe vera, may be soothing.

It's also important to avoid those things that can cause psoriasis symptoms to flare up or make the condition worse. Avoid:

- Skin injury. An injury to the skin can cause psoriasis patches to form anywhere on the body, including the site of the injury. This includes injuries to your nails or nearby skin while trimming your nails.

- Stress and anxiety. Stress can cause psoriasis to appear suddenly (flare) or can make symptoms worse.
- Infection. Infections such as strep throat can cause psoriasis to appear suddenly, especially in children.
- Certain medicines. Some, such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), beta-blockers and lithium, have been found to make psoriasis symptoms worse. Talk with your doctor. You may be able to take a different medicine.
- Overexposure to sunlight. Short periods of sun exposure reduce psoriasis in most people, but too much sun can damage the skin and cause skin cancer. And sunburns can trigger flares of psoriasis.
- Alcohol. Alcohol use can cause symptoms to flare up.
- Smoking. It can make psoriasis worse. If you smoke, try to quit.