

Understanding psoriasis – a misunderstood skin condition



Psoriasis is a chronic, genetic skin disease that's not contagious. It results when faulty signals in the immune system prompt skin cells to redevelop too quickly, causing red, scaly areas that crack and bleed. It often affects the elbows, knees, scalp, and torso but can appear anywhere on the body.

Psoriasis affects far more than the skin. It can have serious physical and emotional effects. Research shows that psoriasis can cause as much disability as other major diseases. Some people with psoriasis develop a type of arthritis.

Often, people with psoriasis wear long sleeves and clothing that can cover the itchy and painful patches of skin to avoid embarrassment.

There's no cure but treatment with medications from a dermatologist can help.

The National Psoriasis Foundation (www.psoriasis.org) is leading the drive to educate others about this condition that affects more than 7 million Americans.