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In psoriasis, red, flaky patches appear on the skin. But did you know that psoriasis is more than skin deep? Read on to understand more about the effects of psoriasis on your or your loved one's body – and mind.

Autoimmune

Psoriasis is an autoimmune condition. This means that the body's immune system sends out faulty messages causing the skin cells to be replaced too quickly. Targeting the immune system may then be the key to treating psoriasis.

Battle

Physical challenges of psoriasis include skin that itches, burns and stings; pain and sleeplessness can also present, as well as battles with body image and self-esteem.

Causes

Triggers for psoriasis can include stress, smoking, drinking too much alcohol, cold weather conditions – and perhaps some foods [5].

Diabetes

According to the National Psoriasis Foundation [6], people with psoriasis are at increased risk for developing type 2 diabetes [7], perhaps because the inflammation associated with psoriasis causes insulin resistance. Both diseases share some common risk factors such as obesity.

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Epidermis

This is the thinner outer visible layer of your skin. In psoriasis, skin cells accumulate here (causing the red flaky patches) since they are multiplying and travelling to the surface at an accelerated rate.

Flare-ups

Happen when symptoms worsen for a time. Knowing your triggers can help you to avoid a flare. If it happens, medication and moisturiser can help the sore skin.

Genetics

There is a link between genetics and psoriasis and the relevant genes have been identified, offering hope for future treatments. If someone's parents both have psoriasis, they have a 50-75% chance of developing the disease.

Heart

There is a slightly increased risk of heart disease and stroke if you have psoriasis, since inflammation can damage arteries. It is then important to control those risk factors that you can, by leading a healthy lifestyle.

Itch

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Joints

For some people with psoriasis, inflammation is also present in the joints (especially the hands and feet) causing psoriatic arthritis which can be painful and disabling.

Kim Kardashian

Some high profile people with psoriasis include Kim Kardashian [8], Cyndi Lauper, Cara [9]Delevingne [9], Liam Gallagher and LeAnn Rimes.

Light

Phototherapy is a common treatment for psoriasis in which light is used to destroy the cells that form the skin patches.

Management

Creams can soften and moisturise the skin; vitamin D creams slow turnover of skin cells whilst steroid creams and tar products can turn down the itch and inflammation.

Tablets include chemotherapy drugs, designed to slow down division of skin cells; injections and infusions known

as ‘biologics’ target troublemakers in the immune system.

Not infectious

Since it is not an infection, psoriasis can’t be passed from person to person, nor can it spread from one part of the body to another.

Other people

The Psoriasis Association [10] offers support, information and advice; they also raise awareness and fund research.

Plaques

Plaque psoriasis is the most common type of the condition; others [11] include pustular psoriasis and nail psoriasis.

Quality of life

Many people lead fulfilling active lives with psoriasis. For some though, it is unsightly and uncomfortable.

Red areas

The skin plaques are red in psoriasis due to growth of new blood vessels to the inflamed areas.

Silver scales

The plaques are often topped with silvery-white scales. These are skin cells waiting to be shed.

Two percent

Psoriasis affects about 2% of the population, occurring equally in men and women and at any age.

Unique

Psoriasis is not the same as eczema. Doctors are trained to look for the clearly defined edges of the skin plaques in psoriasis, and their silver scales.

Virus

Bacterial and viral infections, including tonsillitis, chickenpox and HIV, can trigger psoriasis.

Worse in winter

Symptoms can worsen in cold dry weather; hot weather and humidity can help – but overexposure to the sun can trigger an outbreak.

Exhaustion

Psoriasis can make you feel tired all the time, perhaps because sleep is lost through pain, anxiety and itching. The

inflammation itself may be linked to fatigue.

Ylang ylang

Is a herb that may keep the skin moist; it can also energise. Aromatherapy oils should though always be used with caution [12] and in small amounts.

Zinc

Whilst zinc creams may soothe psoriasis, zinc supplements probably don't. The National Psoriasis Foundation advises patients to "approach any potential vitamins and supplements with a dose of scepticism, and always check with your doctor before beginning a new regimen".

MEDICAL JOURNALISTS' ASSOCIATION

Source URL:https://www.helencowan.co.uk/z-living-psoriasis

Links
[1] https://www.readersdigest.co.uk/health/health-conditions/an-a-to-z-of-living-with-psoriasis [2] https://www.helencowan.co.uk/../tags/skin [3] https://www.helencowan.co.uk/../tags/mental%20health [4] https://www.helencowan.co.uk/../tags/genetics [5] https://www.rd.com/health/conditions/psoriasis-diet/ [6] https://www.psoriasis.org/media/press-releases/psoriasis-tied-higher-risk-type-2-diabetes [7] https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/type-2-diabetes/ [8] https://www.psoriasis.org/media/press-releases/kim-kardashian-has-psoriasis [9] https://overcomingpsoriasis.com/2016/08/09/cara-delevingne-has-psoriasis/ [10] https://www.psoriasis-association.org.uk/who-we-are/ [11] https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/psoriasis/multimedia/psoriasis-pictures/sls-20076486 [12] https://naha.org/explore-aromatherapy/safety