

August is Psoriasis Awareness Month – Chronic Dry Skin is a Problem

Each year, one in five people with psoriasis reports being discriminated against at a public pool. Psoriasis is a chronic dry skin condition, not a contagious disease, and affects 4.5 million people in the United States.

Psoriasis (suh-RY-uh-sus) is a long-term (chronic) skin problem that causes skin cells to grow too quickly, resulting in thick white or red patches of skin. Normally, skin cells grow gradually and flake off about every four weeks. But with psoriasis, new skin cells move rapidly to the surface of the skin in days rather than weeks. They build up and form thick patches called plaques (plax).

The patches range in size from small to large. 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.

Having psoriasis can be embarrassing and many people, especially teens, avoid swimming and other situations

where patches can show. People with psoriasis often notice times when their skin gets worse.

Things that can cause these flare-ups include a cold and dry climate, infections, stress and dry skin. Also, certain medicines, such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and medicines used to treat high blood pressure or certain mental illnesses, can trigger an outbreak or make your psoriasis worse. Smoking also is linked to psoriasis flare-ups.

A doctor usually can diagnose psoriasis by looking at the patches on your skin, scalp or nails. Most cases of psoriasis are mild and treatment begins with skin care. This includes keeping your skin moist with creams and lotions. These often are used with other treatments, including

shampoos, ultraviolet light and medicines your doctor prescribes.

Unfortunately, no cure for psoriasis exists, but there are many ways to manage the condition and relieve the discomfort it causes. Conventional medicine treats psoriasis with various ointments or creams,

including corticosteroids, a synthetic form of vitamin D3, retinoids (synthetic forms of vitamin A) and other topical agents. Various forms of light therapy can help as well.

Many natural remedies also can

be tried to help manage psoriasis. Spending time in the sun can suppress the process leading to skin cell turnover. Some of the medications used to treat psoriasis, however, can make you more sensitive to sunlight, so be sure to ask your doctor or pharmacist about potential reactions.

An anti-inflammatory diet also can help with the inflammation and irritation associated with psoriasis. This includes plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, particularly those rich in carotenoids (mangoes, corn, sweet potatoes, carrots and squash, as well as leafy greens and tomatoes).

In addition, fish oil and a source (such as evening primrose or borage oil) of GLA (gamma-linolenic acid), a fatty acid that promotes healthy growth of skin, hair and nails, may help. Milk thistle (silybum marianum) also may help manage psoriasis. You can find it in the health food store under the name silymarin. Chinese medicine, including acupuncture, also can be helpful.

Since psoriasis often flares up in response to stress, breathing exercises, yoga or visualization may help. Regular exercise and massage can also help. And since the skin is very responsive to hypnotic suggestion, hypnotherapy is definitely worth trying.



Kids at the Tenas Illahee Childcare Center enjoy a dip in the pool to beat the summer heat.

Courtesy photos by Tenas Illahee Childcare Center staff

How You Can Reduce Your Risk of Prostate Cancer

Prostate cancer is the second most common cause of cancer death in men. The prostate is part of the male reproductive organ.

Prostate cancer can develop in men over age 50 and is a slow-growing cancer that can cause many symptoms, including difficulty urinating, pain and erectile dysfunction. Prostate cancer also can be symptom-free and go undetected.

It's diagnosed by a yearly digital rectal exam by your physician and can be monitored with lab work or biopsies if needed.

A man's lifetime risk of getting prostate cancer is higher than lung, colon or any other type of cancer. The risk for prostate cancer increases with age, family history of prostate cancer, African American descent and diets high in fat.

Researchers have estimated that lifestyle factors account for about 75 percent of advanced prostate cancer cases. And of these risk factors, diet appears to be the most influential.

So what can you do to lower your risk? Try the following:

1. Watch your diet. Avoid a diet high in red meat, saturated fat and dairy products. Eat more tomatoes with

lycopene, a carotenoid linked to a lower risk of prostate cancer. Cooked tomato sauces make the nutrient more available than when it's raw. Also include whole soy foods, which contain genistein, an isoflavone that helps normalize hormone levels; fish, which contains omega-3 fatty acids that may be protective; and fiber-rich foods, which influence the elimination of testosterone and estrogen, hormones that might contribute to the development of the disease.

2. Drink green tea. Lab studies indicate that an antioxidant compound in green tea called EGCG kills prostate cancer cells. Another compound in green tea blocks the actions of an enzyme that promotes prostate cancer.
3. Exercise. Regular aerobic exercise is associated with a reduced risk of prostate cancer.
4. Consider prudently taking supplements that include vitamin D and antioxidants, including selenium, a micronutrient that may help support prostate health.
5. Have regular screenings. Rectal exams and some blood tests can provide early detection of problems with the prostate gland.

10 Facts on Spit Tobacco

Spit Tobacco—chew, snuff, dip, or plug

- Spit tobacco isn't safer than smoking
- Spit tobacco has 28 known cancer-causing chemicals
- A 30 minute chew gives the same amount of nicotine as smoking three or four cigarettes
- Using two cans of spit tobacco a week delivers the same amount of nicotine as smoking 30 cigarettes a day for a week.
- Spit tobacco hurts your sense of taste and smell
- Spit tobacco makes teeth yellow and causes gums to bleed
- About 8 million Americans use spit tobacco
- About 34,000 people get oral cancer each year
- Half of all people who get oral cancer die within five years
- The nicotine in spit tobacco can make high blood pressure worse

Take care of your health and your future, you don't need spit tobacco

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