

Psoriasis Awareness Month



What is Psoriasis?

It's easy to think of psoriasis as just a "skin condition." But psoriasis actually starts underneath the skin. It is a chronic (long-lasting) disease of the immune system that can range from mild to severe.

Like most chronic illnesses, psoriasis may be associated with other health conditions such as psoriatic arthritis, Type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease.

The good news is that there are available treatment options and strategies that can help you live well with psoriasis.

Causes of Psoriasis:

The exact cause of psoriasis isn't fully understood, but scientists believe psoriasis is the result of several factors, including genetics, environmental factors, and the immune system.

The Genetic Link

If you have psoriasis, it's possible that someone in your family may have had it too. That's because there appears to be a genetic link for psoriasis.

One out of 3 people with psoriasis reports having a relative with the disease. And researchers say that up to 10% of the general population may inherit one or more genes that predispose them to psoriasis, though only 2% to 3% of people with the gene actually develop the disease.

Environmental Triggers

Certain environmental factors may trigger the psoriasis genes, causing the disease to become active. These environmental triggers vary from person to person, and what causes psoriasis to develop in one person may have no effect on someone else.

Some triggers known to impact psoriasis symptoms include:

- Stress
- Injury to skin (cuts, scrapes, bug bites, severe sunburns)
- Infection (such as strep throat or thrush)
- Certain medications (including lithium, antimalarials, quinidine, indomethacin)

The Key Role of the Immune System:

Your immune system is meant to protect you when an "intruder," like a cold virus, enters your body. But sometimes the immune system mistakes your body's healthy cells for intruders and attacks them. While the exact cause of psoriasis isn't fully understood, scientists believe psoriasis is the result of several factors, including the immune system.

When you have psoriasis, your immune system is overactive. This creates inflammation inside the body, which is a cause of the symptoms you see on the skin. More healthy cells are produced than normal. Those excess cells get pushed to the surface of your skin too quickly. Normally, it takes about a month for your skin cells to cycle through your body. With psoriasis, it takes days.

Your body simply can't shed skin cells that quickly, so the cells build up on the surface of your skin. The thick, red patches you see on your skin (called plaques) are actually a buildup of excess skin cells.

Psoriasis and Comorbidities

When a person has two or more diseases at one time, these are called "comorbidities."

It's important to keep your doctor informed about any symptoms you may be having so the two of you can decide how to possibly avoid or manage comorbidities.

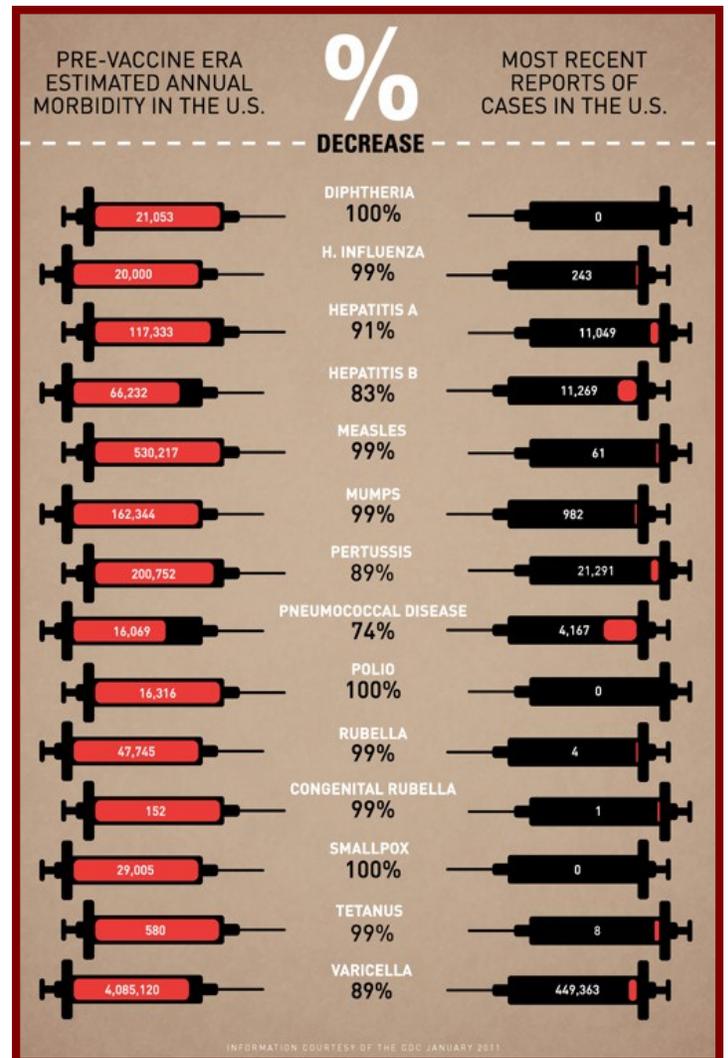
Patients with psoriasis have a greater likelihood of being diagnosed with the following conditions:

- Psoriatic Arthritis
- Crohn's Disease
- Type 2 diabetes
- High cholesterol
- Cardiovascular disease
- Depression
- High blood pressure
- Ulcerative colitis

For more information go to www.psoriasis.com

Immunization Awareness Month

- Vaccines work.** They have kept children healthy and have saved millions of lives for more than 50 years. Most childhood vaccines are 90-99% effective in preventing disease. And if a vaccinated child does get the disease, the symptoms are usually less serious than in a child who hasn't been vaccinated.
- Vaccines are safe.** Before a vaccine is licensed in the United States, the FDA reviews all aspects of development, including where and how the vaccine is made and the studies that have been conducted in people who received the vaccine. The FDA will not license a vaccine unless it meets standards for effectiveness and safety. Results of studies get reviewed again by the CDC, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Academy of Family Physicians before a licensed vaccine is officially recommended to be given to children. Every lot of vaccine is tested to ensure safety before the vaccine reaches the public. In addition, FDA regularly inspects places where vaccines are made.
- Vaccines are necessary.** Your pediatrician believes that your children should receive all recommended childhood vaccines. In the United States, vaccines have and continue to protect children from many diseases. However, in many parts of the world many vaccine-preventable diseases that are rarely seen in the United States are still common. Since some vaccine-preventable diseases still occur in the United States and others may be brought into the United States by Americans who travel abroad or from people visiting areas with current disease outbreaks, it's important that your children are vaccinated.
- Vaccines are studied.** To monitor the safety of vaccines after licensure, the FDA and the CDC created the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). All doctors must report certain side effects of vaccines to VAERS. Parents can also file reports with VAERS.



Keep Immunization Records

Your doctor or the staff at the clinic keeps records of you and your children's shots and the dates they were given. You should also keep your own record. This will help remind you when it is time for the next visit. It will also give you a way to prove that your family is up to date with their immunizations.

US National Immunization Awareness Month #NIAM

- Vaccinations given during any trimester provide mother and baby with protection - even after birth.
- Thousands of adults in the US needlessly suffer, are hospitalized and even die from diseases that could be prevented by vaccines.
- Immunizations can save your child's life by protecting them from 14 serious diseases before they turn 2 years old.
- Despite measles being declared eliminated in the United States in 2000, there were 23 outbreaks affecting 668 people from 27 states in 2014.
- HPV vaccine provides a lifetime of protection against certain forms of cancer.
- Preteens and teens are at greater risk for certain diseases like meningitis, septicemia, and the cancers caused by HPV infection.

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