

### What is National Psoriasis Awareness Month?

The National Psoriasis Foundation (NPF) observes National Psoriasis Awareness Month to encourage the sharing of resources for treating and managing psoriasis to empower individuals to take control of their health.

### What is psoriasis?

Psoriasis is a disease that causes raised, red, scaly patches to appear on the skin. It usually appears on the outside of the elbows, knees or scalp, but can appear on any location. Psoriasis patches itch, burn, and sting. Psoriasis is associated with other serious health conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease, and depression.

### How does a person get psoriasis?

The immune system and genetics play major roles in the onset and development of psoriasis, but the exact cause is unknown. Usually something triggers psoriasis to flare up. Men and women develop psoriasis at equal rates. Psoriasis often develops between the ages of 15 and 35, but it can develop at any age. Psoriasis is not contagious; you cannot “catch” it or give it to someone else.

### How is psoriasis diagnosed?

There are no special blood tests or tools to diagnose psoriasis. A dermatologist (doctor who specializes in skin diseases) or other healthcare provider usually examines the affected skin and determines if it is psoriasis. Your doctor may take a biopsy (small piece of the affected skin) and examine it under a microscope. When looked at in this way, psoriasis skin looks thicker and inflamed when compared to skin with *eczema*, another skin condition.

### Smartphone apps

- [AAD Psoriasis App](#)
- [CatchMyPain](#)
- [MyPsO](#)
- [Skin Advocate](#)

### Tips from our docs

This month, our healthy tip is brought to you by **Jan Kovach, MD**, NMHC’s Medical Director. There are five types of psoriasis. Learning more about your type of psoriasis will help you determine the best treatment for you.

1. **Plaque psoriasis:** the most common form. It appears as raised, red patches covered with a silvery white buildup of dead skin cells. They are often itchy and painful, and they can crack and bleed.
2. **Guttate psoriasis:** appears as small, dot-like lesions. Guttate psoriasis often starts in childhood or young adulthood and can be triggered by a strep infection. This is the second-most-common type of psoriasis.
3. **Inverse psoriasis:** shows up as very red lesions in body folds, such as behind the knee, under the arm or in the groin. It may appear smooth and shiny.
4. **Pustular psoriasis:** is characterized by white *pustules* (blisters of noninfectious pus) surrounded by red skin. The pus consists of white blood cells.
5. **Erythrodermic psoriasis:** a severe form that leads to widespread, fiery redness over most of the body. It can cause intense itching and pain and make the skin come off in sheets. It is rare, occurring in 3 percent of people who have psoriasis during their lifetime.

If you develop a rash that doesn’t go away with an over-the-counter medication, you should consider contacting your doctor.

### Additional resources

- [American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association, Inc.](#)
- [American Academy of Dermatology](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [National Psoriasis Foundation](#)