

Psoriasis: Myths and facts



Psoriasis is a chronic disease that affects about 3 percent of people in the U.S.¹ The chief symptom is skin inflammation. Psoriasis can seem to go away for a while and then suddenly flare up.

During a flare-up, you can get scaly skin patches on your knees, elbows, scalp — or anywhere else on your body. Your skin may itch, burn or bleed. Psoriasis can make you feel uncomfortable and self-conscious.

TRUE OR FALSE?	ANSWERS
1. Psoriasis is genetic.	1. True. Psoriasis tends to run in families.
2. If you touch someone with psoriasis, you can catch it.	2. False. Psoriasis is not contagious even if you touch, kiss or have sex during a flare-up.
3. There is no cure for psoriasis but treatments can help during a flare-up.	3. True. There is no cure yet. But there are many ways to deal with flare-ups including creams, pills and UV light therapy.
4. People with psoriasis should stay away from others when they have flare-ups.	4. False. During flare-ups, people may feel upset about the way their skin looks. But there is no medical reason for staying away.
5. People with psoriasis can get depressed.	5. True. Like anything else that causes self-consciousness, psoriasis can lead to stress, low self-esteem and depression. Support groups and stress reduction are good ways to cope.

How many answers did you get right?

People who have psoriasis need to take special care of themselves. But their illness poses no risk to others. For more information, visit the National Psoriasis Foundation website.

¹Types of psoriasis: Medical pictures and treatments. Accessed April 2017.

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