

Pityriasis rosea is a relatively mild skin disorder characterized by a salmon or pink colored, scaly rash. Pityriasis rosea most often affects children and young adults. In many individuals with pityriasis rosea, the characteristic rash develops after vague, nonspecific symptoms that resemble those associated with an upper respiratory infection. The rash is usually located on the back, chest and stomach and resolves on its own within one to three months. Certain treatments may reduce the duration of the rash. Researchers believe that pityriasis rosea is caused by an infectious pathogen, but they have been unable to isolate and identify such a pathogen. Some reports in the medical literature state that pityriasis rosea affects females more often than males; others state that the disorder affects males and females in equal numbers. The disorder most commonly affects individuals between the ages of 10 and 35, but has been reported in all age groups including infants and the elderly. Pityriasis rosea occurs with greater frequency in the spring and autumn months. A diagnosis of pityriasis rosea is made based upon identification of characteristic symptoms, a detailed patient history, and a thorough clinical evaluation. In the earlier stages of the disorder, additional tests such as blood tests or a biopsy may be necessary to distinguish pityriasis rosea from similar skin disorders.