

Pemphigus and pemphigoid are rare autoimmune blistering diseases of the skin and/or mucous membranes. Pemphigus affects the outer of the skin (epidermis) and causes lesions and blisters that are easily ruptured. Pemphigoid affects a lower layer of the skin, between the epidermis and the dermis, creating tense blisters that do not break easily. Sometimes pemphigoid may look like hives or eczema without blisters. Pemphigus and pemphigoid are not genetic (hereditary) though there can be a genetic predisposition to develop the disease. A person who is genetically predisposed to a disorder carries a gene (or genes) for the disease, but it may not be expressed unless it is triggered or “activated” under certain circumstances, such as due to particular environmental factors. It is not currently possible to predict who may get these diseases. Men and women are equally affected. The conditions are known to affect people across racial and cultural lines. However, there are certain groups of people (Ashkenazi Jews, people of Mediterranean, North Indian and Persian decent) who have a higher incidence of the disease.