

# PITYRIASIS ROSEA

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## BASIC INFORMATION

### DESCRIPTION

A non-contagious, inflammatory skin disorder (especially of the chest and abdomen) with a faint rash that lasts weeks to months. It affects all ages but is most common in adolescents and young adults.

### FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- A faint rash often found in skin creases of oval or round, pale-pink or light-brown areas. One larger patch (the “herald patch”) may appear first. They may evolve into a “Christmas tree” pattern on the chest or back.
- Mild fatigue.
- Itching, usually mild.
- Occasional slight fever and headache.

### CAUSES

Unknown, but may be caused by a virus or autoimmune disorder.

### RISK INCREASES WITH

Fall and spring seasons.

### PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Cannot be prevented at present.

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Pityriasis rosea usually runs its natural course in 5 weeks to 4 months. No medication or treatment is available to shorten its course, but itching and discomfort can be relieved.
- The skin eruptions won't leave scars unless complicated by a secondary infection. New rash areas continue to break out for several weeks. Once over, one episode seems to confer lifelong immunity.
- Although pityriasis rosea is probably caused by an infectious agent, it is not contagious. Even close family contacts are unlikely to develop the disease.

### POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

Secondary bacterial infection of the rash area.



## TREATMENT

### GENERAL MEASURES

- Treatment is focused on relieving the itching.
- Bathe as usual with a mild soap. Use warm water, as hot water may intensify the itching. Oatmeal baths may help. You don't need to sterilize the tub or shower after bathing.
- Expose the skin to moderate amounts of sunlight. This may decrease the rash.

### MEDICATIONS

For minor discomfort, you may use non-prescription drugs, such as:

- Calamine lotion to decrease itching.
- Steroid cream to control severe itching (a rare symptom).
- Acetaminophen to reduce fever.
- Other topical steroids and/or antihistamines may be prescribed.

### ACTIVITY

Usually no restrictions.

### DIET

No special diet.



## NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of pityriasis rosea.
- The following occur during treatment:
  - Fever over 101° F (38.3° C).
  - Signs of infection (warmth, redness, tenderness, pain and swelling) in the rash area.