

Symptoms and diagnosis

Psoriasis

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Psoriasis is a skin condition that causes red patches of skin which are dry and flaky (scaly).

You can get it on areas such as your scalp, elbows or knees. But you can get it anywhere on your body. It depends on the type of psoriasis you have. Some types only affect certain parts of your body.

Symptoms of psoriasis

On white skin the patches can look pink or red, and the scales white or silvery.

On brown and black skin the patches can look pink, red, purple or dark brown. The scales may look grey, white or silvery.

You may find that psoriasis causes your skin to become itchy or sore.

Psoriasis can come and go and may be mild or moderate to severe.

Diagnosing psoriasis

Talk to your GP if:

- you think you may have psoriasis

They can check if you have it and help you get the treatment you need.

Contact your GP or out-of-hours GP for an urgent appointment if you:

- have intense itching or burning that comes on suddenly
- get pus-filled blisters (pustules) on a wide area of skin in a short space of time

These may be symptoms of rare types of psoriasis that you need emergency treatment for.

You will need an urgent referral from your GP to a dermatologist and admission to hospital.

Common types of psoriasis

The most common types of psoriasis include plaque psoriasis, scalp psoriasis and nail psoriasis.

Plaque psoriasis (psoriasis vulgaris)

Plaque psoriasis (psoriasis vulgaris) is the most common type of psoriasis. More than 8 in 10 cases of psoriasis are plaque psoriasis.

You will have dry red skin lesions (called plaques), which are covered in scales.

They usually appear on your elbows, knees, scalp and lower back. But they can appear anywhere on your body. The plaques can be itchy or sore, or both. In severe cases, the skin around your joints may crack and bleed.

Scalp psoriasis

Scalp psoriasis is a type of plaque psoriasis.

You can get it on parts of your scalp or on the whole scalp.

Patches of your scalp are covered in thick scales (dry and flaky). It may cause your scalp to become itchy.

In extreme cases, it can cause hair loss, but this is usually only for a short time.

[Scalp psoriasis - papaa.org](http://papaa.org)

Guttate psoriasis

Guttate psoriasis causes small drop-shaped spots. You will get these on your chest, arms, legs and scalp.

Sometimes you can get it after a streptococcal throat infection.

It is more common among children and teenagers.

There's a good chance guttate psoriasis will go away after a few weeks. But in some cases it can develop into plaque psoriasis.

Inverse (flexural) psoriasis

Inverse psoriasis affects parts of your body where there are folds or creases in your skin. This could be your armpit, groin, bottom or under your breasts. It can cause large, smooth patches in some or all these areas.

Friction and sweating can make inverse psoriasis worse. This means you can be uncomfortable in hot weather.

Nail psoriasis

Psoriasis can affect your nails. This happens to less than half of people who get the condition.

It can cause your nails to:

- develop tiny dents or pits
- change colour or shape
- become loose and separate from the nail bed
- crumble - this only happens in severe cases

[Nail psoriasis - papaa.org](http://papaa.org)

Less common types

There are a number of rarer types of psoriasis.

[+ Pustular psoriasis](#)

[Palmoplantar
pustulosis](#)

[+ Acropustulosis](#)

Types of psoriasis you need emergency treatment for

You will usually need emergency treatment if you have symptoms of either of these 2 types of psoriasis.

[+ Erythrodermic psoriasis](#)

[+ Generalised pustular psoriasis or von Zumbusch psoriasis](#)

Psoriatic arthritis

Some people with psoriasis get psoriatic arthritis.

- [Psoriatic arthritis symptoms and diagnosis](#)

Content supplied by the [NHS](#) and adapted for Ireland by the HSE

Page last reviewed: 8 June 2023

Next review due: 8 June 2026

This project has received funding from the Government of Ireland's Sláintecare Integration Fund 2019 under Grant Agreement Number 123.

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