

What is pityriasis lichenoides?

Pityriasis lichenoides (PL) is an uncommon skin rash. PL has two main forms:

1. Pityriasis lichenoides et varioliformis acuta (PLEVA): this “acute” (fast) form comes on quickly.
2. Pityriasis lichenoides chronica (PLC): this “chronic” (long) form often develops slowly and lasts longer.

While PLEVA and PLC may look and act differently, they are the same disease and can have similar features and treatments.

WHAT DOES PL LOOK AND FEEL LIKE?

PLEVA and PLC each cause a certain type of rash.

PLEVA:

- » PLEVA can show up anywhere on the body, but is often found on the arms, legs, and trunk.
- » PLEVA can involve blisters, bumps, sores, and crusted areas on the body.
- » It is sometimes mistaken for chicken pox early on.
- » PLEVA usually goes away within 6 months to several years.

PLC:

- » PLC can show up anywhere on the body, but is often found on the arms, legs, and trunk.
- » PLC is a skin rash with pink, light, tan, or brown spots that are rough or scaly.
- » PLC usually lasts for several years. For some patients, the rash may come and go during this time.

Both PLEVA and PLC can be itchy in some patients. Other patients may have a burning feeling in the skin rash or no symptoms at all.

PL can leave light or dark spots on the skin. These marks may take many months to fade away.

WHAT CAUSES PL?

PL is caused by the immune system overacting in the skin. The exact trigger for PL is not known. In some cases, it could be a reaction to an earlier infection or medication.

WHO GETS PL?

PL is rare. It is most common in children and young adults. PL occurs in all races and skin colors.

HOW IS PL DIAGNOSED?

PL can often be diagnosed by a doctor looking at your child's rash and skin. Other times, your doctor may need to do a skin biopsy. This involves a small numbing shot and taking a sample of the rash to look at under the microscope.

HOW IS PL TREATED?

There are no cures for PL. There are many treatments to help control the rash or itch.

Commonly used treatments include:

- » Prescription creams to decrease redness and itch.
- » Prescription antibiotics by mouth, usually taken for several months.
- » In-office light treatments, 2-3 times per week.
- » Anti-itch medicines by mouth.
- » For long-lasting or severe cases, medicines that target the immune system may also be used.

ARE THERE ANY COMPLICATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH PL?

Many children with PL will have no complications. Some things to watch out for:

- » PL skin lesions may cause itch or pain.
- » Children with PL may be bothered by the visible rash, especially if it is on visible areas like the face, neck, and arms.
- » PL can sometimes leave behind areas of scar.



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