PATIENT PERSPECTIVES

What is Psoriasis?

Psoriasis is a skin condition that causes red, scaly patches on the skin. These patches can show up anywhere on the body. They are common on the arms, legs, and scalp. Psoriasis can affect just a small part of the skin or cover a large area. It can happen to anyone – kids or adults. You cannot catch it from someone else.

WHAT CAUSES PSORIASIS?

Psoriasis happens when the body's immune system causes skin cells to grow too fast. The extra skin piles up. Some things that can make psoriasis more likely are:

- **Family history:** If someone in your family has psoriasis, you might be more likely to get it.
- **Immune system:** In psoriasis, the body's defense system causes inflammation in the skin.
- **Triggers:** Certain things can make psoriasis worse, like:
  - *Stress:* Feeling stressed or anxious can make it worse.
  - *Infections:* Colds, ear infections, or strep throat can trigger it.
  - *Skin injuries:* Scrapes or cuts on the skin can cause psoriasis in those spots.
  - *Weather:* Cold, dry weather can make it worse.

WHO GETS PSORIASIS?

Anyone can get psoriasis, even babies. Psoriasis can happen in any gender. About 1 out of every 100 kids have it. If someone in your family has psoriasis, you are more likely to get it, too.

WHAT DOES PSORIASIS LOOK LIKE?

- Psoriasis causes red, raised patches with white or silver flakes. On darker skin, the patches might look dark red, purple, or dark brown.
- Psoriasis most often shows up on the head, elbows, and knees, but it can happen anywhere.
- It can also affect the nails, making them thick, yellow, or rough.

HOW DO DOCTORS KNOW YOU HAVE PSORIASIS?

Doctors can usually tell if someone has psoriasis just by looking at their skin. They may ask questions about family history, stress, or infections. Sometimes, the doctor might take a small sample of skin to confirm it is psoriasis.

DOES PSORIASIS CAUSE OTHER HEALTH PROBLEMS?

Some children with psoriasis can also have joint problems. This is called psoriatic arthritis. Talk to your doctor if your child is having joint pains.

Adults with psoriasis are more likely to have high blood pressure, high blood sugar, and high cholesterol. These problems are not common in kids. But, as kids with psoriasis grow up, it is important that they eat healthy food and get exercise. This helps keep their bodies healthy as they grow. Treating the psoriasis can also lower these risks. For teens or adults with psoriasis, doctors may check blood tests to watch for these problems.

HOW IS PSORIASIS TREATED IN CHILDREN?

There is no cure for psoriasis, but treatments can help. Some treatments for children include:

MOISTURIZERS
Creams or lotions keep the skin soft and reduce itching, dryness, and flaking.

TOPICAL MEDICATIONS
These are creams or ointments that go on the skin. Some help make the skin less red and itchy. Other creams help slow down skin growth and get rid of flakes.

LIGHT THERAPY
Special light treatments can help some kids with psoriasis.

SYSTEMIC MEDICATIONS
For more severe cases, kids may be prescribed pills or shots.

Doctors will work with the child and family to choose the best treatment.

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