

Information for School Nurses & Educators

# 5 Psoriasis

## How can I support a student with psoriasis?

- ✓ Ask the student and their family directly how you can help. Take this opportunity to listen to their individual needs.
- ✓ Provide the opportunity for them to discuss their condition with the class if they wish to do so. They may prefer the teacher provides information to the class. This can allow their peers to ask questions in a productive setting.
- ✓ Immediately address any teasing and bullying. Provide education to any students saying harmful things and offer effective support for the affected student.
- ✓ Students may need psychologic support if suffering emotional distress due to their condition. Discuss this with their parents and refer to counseling as appropriate.
- ✓ Recognize their interests and acknowledge their successes in the classroom and in social settings.

## OVERVIEW

Psoriasis is a common skin condition which results in thick, scaly red spots on the skin. In psoriasis, the immune system is over-activated which causes faster growth of skin cells and results in thickening of the skin in certain areas.

The knees and elbows are the most common areas of involvement, but the look of psoriasis can be very different from person to person - some have few small, scaly spots and some have involvement of most of their skin. Young children may have tiny scaly red bumps over a large area of their body.

Typically, psoriasis will flare for a few weeks and months and then improve for some time. Psoriasis in children can be triggered by recent infections, such as a cold or ear infection, or injury to the skin.

Psoriasis is a long-term disease with no cure. There are several treatment options including topical creams, light therapy, oral medications, and injections.



**What symptoms does someone with psoriasis experience?**

The affected areas of skin may be itchy or uncomfortable and can bleed easily. In addition, psoriatic arthritis can also occur which causes stiffness and pain in joints.

The student may feel insecure and lack confidence due to their visible skin disease. Children with psoriasis are at increased risk for depression and anxiety.

**What special measures might students with psoriasis need?**

The student may need application of creams and moisturizers throughout the day and should be given time and privacy to do this. They may also need to take oral medications.

**Is it contagious?**

No, psoriasis is not contagious. Other students will not get psoriasis with physical contact or play.



SOURCES &  
ADDITIONAL  
RESOURCES

- > **School Action Resources**  
National Psoriasis Foundation  
<https://www.psoriasis.org/school-resources/>

The Society for Pediatric Dermatology  
8365 Keystone Crossing, Suite 107  
Indianapolis, IN 46240  
(317) 202-0224  
[www.pedsderm.net](http://www.pedsderm.net)

