



Psoriasis Awareness Month

Psoriasis is the most common autoimmune disease in the United States. As many as 7.5 million Americans have psoriasis.

Psoriasis is a chronic, autoimmune disease that appears on the skin. It occurs when the immune system sends out faulty signals that speed up the growth cycle of skin cells.

Symptoms and Diagnosis

Psoriasis causes raised, red, scaly patches to appear on the skin. It can appear in any location—on the eyelids, ears, scalp, mouth and lips, skin folds, hands, feet, and nails. It is sometimes reported that psoriasis is itchy, burns and stings.

If you develop a rash that does not go away with the use of an over the counter medication, you should consider contacting your doctor.

Roughly 95 percent of the time, your doctor can make a diagnosis just by visual inspection. Your doctor will consider where the raised, red scales appear, if they have well-defined edges and how the rash responds to medication when making a diagnosis.

Your doctor will also want to learn about your family history. Approximately one-third of those diagnosed with psoriasis, have a family member with the disease.

Triggers

Researchers believe that in order for a person to develop psoriasis, the individual must have a combination of one or more inherited genes that create a disposition to psoriasis and be exposed to specific external factor, "triggers". Psoriasis triggers are not universal. What can cause one person's psoriasis to become active, may not affect another. Established triggers include stress, injury to skin, and certain medications. Some with psoriasis suspect that allergies, diet, and weather play a role in triggering their psoriasis.

Treatment

There is no cure for psoriasis, but treatments may offer significant relief. Psoriasis treatments fall into three main types: topical treatments, light therapy, and systemic medications.

Living with psoriasis has unique challenges. Researchers are focused now more than ever on finding solutions to those challenges.

Source: The National Psoriasis Foundation
www.psoriasis.org



Types of Psoriasis

- **Plaque**-The most common form of the disease and appears as raised, red patches covered with a buildup of dead skin cells. Patches or plaques often appear on the scalp, knees, elbows and lower back.
- **Guttate**- The 2nd most common form, often starts in childhood. It appears as small, red spots on the skin typically on the torso and limbs. They are generally not as thick as plaque psoriasis but can precede or co-exist with other forms of psoriasis.
- **Inverse**- Shows up as extremely red lesions in body folds. It can appear as smooth and shiny. Many people have another form of psoriasis elsewhere on the body at the same time.
- **Pustular**- Is characterized by white pustules (blisters of noninfectious pus) surrounded by red skin. It is not an infection and not contagious.
- **Erythrodermic**- Is the least common and may occur once or more during a lifetime in 1 to 2 percent of people with psoriasis-generally those with unstable plaque psoriasis. It is characterized by widespread, fiery redness, and exfoliation of the skin. If an individual experiences a flare, he or she should see a doctor immediately, as it "throws off" the body's chemistry causing protein and fluid loss that can lead to severe illness.

Recipe of the Month

Summer Vegetable Soup

Serves 8

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 yellow onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 4 Roma tomatoes, peeled, seeded, & diced
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh oregano
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 4 cups vegetable stock or broth
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 carrot, peeled, thinly sliced crosswise
- 1 yellow bell pepper, seeded & diced
- 1 zucchini, halved & thinly sliced
- 1 tbsp grated lemon zest
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh cilantro
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp freshly ground black pepper

Directions:

In large saucepan, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add onion and sauté about 4 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté for 30 seconds; don't let it brown. Add tomatoes, oregano, and cumin then sauté about 4 minutes. Add stock & bay leaf, bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium low and bring to a simmer. Add carrot & bell pepper and cook for 2 minutes. Add zucchini & simmer about 3 minutes. Stir in the lemon zest and cilantro. Season with salt and pepper. Discard the bay leaf. Ladle into individual bowls or serve immediately.

Nutritional Information:

Calories 60, Total Fat 2g, Cholesterol 0mg, Total Carbs 9g, Dietary fiber 2g, Protein 2g

