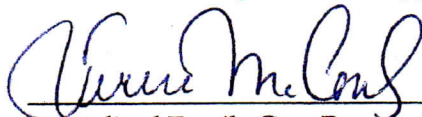


**SPECIALIZED FAMILY CARE
Provider Training**

Category:	Health
Title:	Psoriasis
Materials:	Articles: "Psoriasis"; "Winter Tips for Managing Psoriasis"
Goal:	Provider knows symptoms of psoriasis and how to treat
Credit Hours:	1
Date Developed:	September 2014
Developed by:	Donna McCune, MSW, Family Based Care Specialist

This Training Packet was approved for the Specialized Family Care Training Program by:



9/8/14

Specialized Family Care Program Manager

Date

Training Objectives:

- Provider can define psoriasis
- Provider knows how to recognize symptoms of psoriasis
- Provider knows possible causes of psoriasis flare-ups
- Provider knows management techniques for psoriasis

Training Procedures:

- Provider initiated self study
- Test completed by Provider
- Review of test responses by Family Based Care Specialist and Provider

I certify that I have completed all the materials associated with this training module. I feel that I have a basic understanding of the material completed.

Specialized Family Care Provider

Date

Reviewed by:

Family Based Care Specialist

Date

This Program is funded by the WV Department of Health & Human Resources, Bureau for Children & Families and administered by the Center for Excellence in Disabilities, West Virginia University.

WVDHHR/CED/SFC/PSORIASIS/SEPTEMBER 2014

Psoriasis

Psoriasis is a common, irritating condition which causes the skin to itch, crack and bleed. Most people with psoriasis have thick, red skin with flaky, silver-white patches called scales.ⁱ The skin may be raised and thick. Other symptoms may include:

- Genital sores in males
- Joint pain or aching
- Nail changes, including thick nails, yellow-brown nails, dents in the nail, and a lifting of the nail from the skin underneath
- Severe dandruff on the scalpⁱⁱ

Psoriasis can occur on many places of the body with the elbows, knees, feet, palms of hands, back, scalp and face being the most common areas.

Psoriasis is caused by a problem with the body's immune system. "In a process called cell turnover, skin cells which grow deep in the skin rise to the surface. Normally, this takes a month. In psoriasis, it happens in days because your cells rise too fast."ⁱⁱⁱ A person's immune system attacks, inflames or destroys healthy body tissue.

Psoriasis most often begins between the ages of 15 and 35. It is not contagious. It seems to be passed down through families. Symptoms can come and go. It can worsen or there may be times when it is in remission, with periods when the skin is clear.

Flare ups of the condition may be caused by certain things such as:

- Dry air
- Too little sunlight or too much sunlight (sunburn)
- Colder temperatures
- Stress
- Bacterial or viral infections, such as strep throat or upper respiratory infections
- Some medicines
- Skin injuries such as cuts, burns, insect bites
- Too much alcohol

Doctors or nurses can often diagnose psoriasis by looking at the skin. Sometimes a skin biopsy is done to rule out other possible conditions. The goal of treatment is to control the symptoms and prevent infection. Treatment options are:

- Topical treatments (placed directly on the skin or scalp)
 - Cortisone creams and ointments
 - Creams or ointments that contain coal tar or anthralin
 - Creams to remove scaling
 - Dandruff shampoos
 - Moisturizers
 - Prescription medicines containing vitamin D or vitamin A

- Systemic or body-wide treatments: pills or injections that affect the body's immune response (Medicines which suppress the immune system)
- Using light: phototherapy. (A medical treatment in which skin is exposed to ultraviolet light.)

Psoriasis is a life-long condition that can be controlled with treatment. With proper treatment it does not affect overall health.

Bibliography

Medline Plus, <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000434.htm>

National Psoriasis Foundation, 1966-2014, National Psoriasis Foundation/USA

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US National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health

ⁱ <http://nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000434.htm>

ⁱⁱ <http://nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/00434.htm>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/psoriasis.html>

Winter tips for managing psoriasis

by Dr. Andy Robertson

Cold weather can wreak havoc on your skin. If you're one of the 7.5 million Americans living with psoriasis—a chronic, noncontagious disease of the immune system that causes the skin to crack, itch and bleed—winter is the most challenging season.

According to the National Psoriasis Foundation, psoriasis is the most common autoimmune disease in the country, appearing most frequently on the scalp, knees, elbows and torso. Dry air, decreased sunlight and colder temperatures contribute to psoriasis flares. Additionally, holiday stress and winter illnesses such as flu and strep throat can trigger psoriasis. Following these tips may help you deal with an outbreak.



Moisturize to reduce redness and itching

Creams and ointments are thicker and more hydrating than lotions, and they lock in more moisture to the skin. Aim for fragrance-free products or those designed for sensitive skin to avoid irritation. Experts say it's best to apply moisturizers to damp skin immediately after a shower.

Bathe or shower in lukewarm, not hot, water

Hot water dries out skin and can worsen itching. Cutting down on showers is best in the winter, when indoor air is dryer. If possible, try to limit yourself to one shower a day and use soap for sensitive skin. Products with oil, oatmeal, Dead Sea salts or Epsom salts can help remove psoriasis plaques.

Ease stress

Stress is a known trigger for psoriasis. Find something you like that relaxes you, such as reading a good book or taking a long walk. The National Psoriasis Foundation recommends relaxation and stress-reduction techniques like meditation and yoga to help manage the disease. Be sure to talk with your doctor about any alternative treatments.

Consider phototherapy

Phototherapy, or light therapy, may be helpful in the winter. It exposes the skin to ultraviolet light B (UVB), which is beneficial for psoriasis. Treatments are done in a doctor's office or with a home phototherapy unit prescribed by a dermatologist.

Wear soft layers

People with psoriasis often experience itching and discomfort with certain clothing. A layer of silk or cotton as an undergarment beneath uncomfortable garments can help relieve itching. Undergarments can also protect your clothing from messy psoriasis treatments such as topical ointments. Additionally, try to avoid wool and synthetic fibers that can irritate skin.

Improve your treatment plan

A simple adjustment to your medicine or doses may help relieve symptoms. Talk with your doctor if your psoriasis worsens in the winter.

Additional information about psoriasis and treatments is available from the National Psoriasis Foundation at psoriasis.org.



Andy Robertson, Ph.D., joined the National Psoriasis Foundation in 2012 as its chief scientific and medical officer. With more than 20 years of biomedical, life science and academic research experience in his background, Dr. Robertson oversees all of the Foundation's research activities and guides the strategic leadership of its science and medical programs. He received his Bachelor of Arts in biology from the University of California, San Diego and his doctorate in biochemistry from the University of Wisconsin, Madison.