

Psoriasis

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Psoriasis is a common, inheritable skin disorder affecting up to 3% of the population and can affect any age but predominantly begins before the age of 20. It is characterised by reddish patches covered by thick, dry, silvery scaling that result from excessive development of skin cells.

The severity of psoriasis varies greatly between individuals and in most cases does not affect general health unless it is associated with severe arthritis known as psoriatic arthritis. Visually however it can cause great distress to the sufferer. It usually develops slowly, following a typical pattern of remission and recurrence and is not contagious. It can occur on any area of the body but most commonly appears on the knees, elbows, sacrum, scalp, ears, eyebrows, nails, back or in skin folds.

The underlying cause of psoriasis is not always fully understood and can vary from person to person and each person may have more than one trigger. Stress, toxicity, alcohol, smoking, diet damage to the skin, microbial infections (especially streptococcal), certain medications and even the climate are known triggers for some people. Another significant trigger is related to the health of the gastrointestinal system. It has been recognised that toxins leaking through the gut wall can play a role in the expression of psoriasis. Intestinal permeability (or leaky gut) leads to toxins and microbial antigens being reabsorbed into the blood stream through a leaky gut wall. Once in the blood stream they can trigger inflammation and immune responses and impact on your general wellbeing.

The immune system plays a role in psoriasis and recent research indicates that psoriasis may begin in the body's immune system. Psoriasis is believed to be an autoimmune condition which means the immune system begins to attack its own tissues within the body. Psoriasis is thought to be triggered when a certain type of white blood cell (immune cell), called a T cell, malfunctions and begins to reproduce uncontrollably. In prone individuals, this often happens in response to a streptococcal infection. These malfunctioning T cells travel to the surface of the skin and start an inflammatory reaction in which the skin cells begin to multiply 7-12 times faster than normal. This is what begins the psoriatic plaque, the build up of skin cells.

Treatment for psoriasis needs to reach down a lot further than the skin in order to correct the underlying imbalances and send it into remission rather than suppress the expression of the condition through the skin. We can increase the remission time and decrease the likelihood of flare ups through balancing the immune system and reducing and correcting any of the triggering factors. Addressing the immune system and the gastrointestinal system are two of the biggest factors and generally addressed first as a priority. A thorough detoxification program is in most cases a key factor to improving psoriasis. Eliminating pathogenic bacteria, replacing beneficial bacteria, repairing gastrointestinal integrity and improving liver function through a personalized detoxification program can make a significant difference to the presentation of psoriasis. Stress, diet, environmental issues, nutritional deficiencies, infections and other triggering factors all need to be addressed as well as your treatment progresses. We need to work from the inside out in terms of successfully treating psoriasis and limiting the likelihood of its return. Herbs and nutritional substances have a significant role to play and coupled with some modifications to diet and lifestyle we can help to balance the immune and address the other actions mentioned as important including gastrointestinal health.

Far Infrared saunas are another tool we possess at the clinic with the ability for improving detoxification and removing toxins from the system, allowing it the opportunity to repair itself. The far infrared wavelengths directly penetrate into the subcutaneous fat (the fat under the skin) to trigger the mobilization of chemicals from storage in our fat. The mobilized chemicals are then excreted via the skin through sweating. This avoids any possible exacerbation of

original symptoms which can occur when toxins are pulled back into the blood stream. This allows for direct removal of toxins via the skin without placing any extra burden on your liver and kidneys, helping to lighten their often already heavy load. Apart from their specific effects of enhancing detoxification, far infrared saunas also improve blood flow to the skin increasing skin repair and renewal and improving overall skin health. They may help to reduce swelling, improve lymphatic flow and blood circulation, stimulate the immune system and helps kill bacteria and parasites. Thus they may play a beneficial role in the treatment of many skin disorders, including psoriasis.

Psoriasis is a symptom of imbalances within the body. Thus correcting these imbalances is paramount to improving the condition successfully and holistically. Your whole wellbeing will generally be enhanced and your overall health improved via naturopathic treatment for psoriasis as nothing is viewed in isolation and all imbalances need to be addressed in order for optimal results.