

## **Ask Dr. Mikell**

By Dr. Oswald Mikell

### **Dr. Oswald Mikell, MD • Dermatology Associates of the Lowcountry**

American Board of Dermatology | American Board of Cosmetic Surgery | Physician of the Year 2008

**Q:** What is Psoriasis?

**A:** Psoriasis is a skin problem that causes skin cells to grow too quickly. Normally, skin cells grow gradually and flake off about every 4 weeks. New skin cells grow to replace the outer layers of the skin as they shed. But in psoriasis, new skin cells move rapidly to the surface of the skin in days rather than weeks. They build up and form thick patches on the surface of the skin. Psoriasis is most common in adults, but children and teens can get it too.

**Q:** What are the symptoms?

**A:** The classic symptoms of psoriasis are raised, red patches of skin topped with loose, silvery scales. The patches range in size from small to large, and most often appear on the knees, elbows, scalp, hands, feet, or lower back.

**Q:** Is Psoriasis contagious?

**A:** Psoriasis is not contagious at all. You can't catch it from, or pass it on to, another person

**Q:** Is Psoriasis only a skin disease?

**A:** Psoriasis is actually an immune-system disease that causes abnormal growth of skin cells.

**Q:** Is Psoriasis curable?

**A:** Psoriasis is a lifelong condition that currently has no cure. That being said, the condition can be managed through proper treatment.

**Q:** Is Psoriasis the result of poor hygiene?

**A:** There is no link between the disease and hygiene. Again, psoriasis is an immune-system disease; it can be triggered by various factors, including weather, stress, infections, skin trauma, and certain medications.

**Q:** Is Psoriasis easy to diagnose?

**A:** Unfortunately, it can be difficult to diagnose psoriasis, and the disease is often mistaken for skin conditions such as eczema.

**Q:** Is Psoriasis difficult to cope with?

**A:** Psoriasis can have a profound psychological impact on sufferers. In severe cases, the effects can be debilitating, especially when the symptoms are easily visible. People with psoriasis may experience a range of emotions, from frustration and embarrassment to anger and depression.

**Q:** How do I know if I have Psoriasis and what treatments are available?

**A:** Call Dermatology Associates of the Lowcountry and schedule a consult (843) 689-5259