

Our aims

We aim to help people with psoriasis by:

- Providing information and advice
- Increasing public acceptance and understanding
- Collecting funds for and promoting research
- Representing the interests of members at a local and national level

Members of the Psoriasis Association receive:

- A quarterly magazine
- An invitation to the Annual Conference and AGM
- Information about local and national events
- Up to date information about treatments.

If you would like to join The Psoriasis Association, please contact us on 01604 251620, mail@psoriasis-association.org.uk or write to us at the address overleaf.

Make a donation

I would like to make a donation of £ _____ to the Psoriasis Association

I enclose a cheque Please debit my card

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Gift Aid

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The Psoriasis Association will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 donated. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. I must notify the Psoriasis Association if I no longer pay sufficient tax or wish to cancel this declaration.

We rely on the generosity of people like you...

Each year the Psoriasis Association helps thousands of people whose lives have been affected by psoriasis via our websites, telephone and email helplines and by raising awareness amongst the general public, healthcare professionals and Members of Parliament.

We rely on your generosity to help us continue our vital work in supporting people, raising awareness and funding research.

How to contact us

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psoriasis
information

scalp psoriasis

Charity registration number 1180666



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The scalp is one of the most common areas to be affected by psoriasis...



What is psoriasis?

Psoriasis is a common skin condition affecting 2-3% of the population of the United Kingdom and Ireland. Psoriasis is an immune condition which affects the skin and sometimes the joints. When a person has psoriasis, the skin replacement process speeds up, taking just a few days to replace skin cells that usually take 21-28 days. This results in an accumulation of skin cells on the surface of the skin, in the form of a psoriatic plaque. This process is the same wherever it occurs on the body. Psoriasis is a long-term condition that may wax and wane, ie. sometimes it is mild and sometimes it is more severe. There is no cure, but there are many treatments available to help manage psoriasis.

? What does scalp psoriasis look like?

Psoriasis appears as raised red (or dark on darker skin tones) patches of skin covered with silvery, white or yellow scaly skin. Loose scaly skin looks similar to dandruff and might be noticeable in the hair or on dark clothing. Scaly skin and redness might be noticeable around the sides of the scalp, on the forehead, neck and behind the ears.

? How does scalp psoriasis feel?

Some people with scalp psoriasis say that it feels itchy, tight or sore.

? When should I go to the doctor?

Many people can manage mild scalp psoriasis themselves. There are a number of shampoo treatments that can be bought over the counter. Your pharmacist should be able to advise.

However, if your scalp is covered with thick scale or it does not clear up do consult your GP. There is a range of treatments that can be prescribed including coal tar, dithranol, salicylic acid, steroid and Vitamin D based treatments. Various scalp treatments are available in cream, ointment, mousse, gel or shampoo formulations.

If your scalp psoriasis is particularly difficult to treat, your GP may refer you to a Dermatologist, Dermatology Nurse Specialist, or GP with a Special Interest in skin.

? Applying the treatment

It is important to get the method of applying scalp treatment right – the treatment needs to be on the scalp rather than on the hair. It might be best to part the hair in sections and apply the treatment on the exposed areas of scalp. You may need someone to help you to reach the top and back of your head properly. You will find that some treatments need to be left on and some need to be washed out after a set period of time. Do follow the instructions that come with the product or the advice of your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

? Can I brush and comb my hair?

It is normal to want to comb or brush hair, and it can actually be helpful to remove loose scales. Just take care not to scratch the scalp.

? What about perms and other hair treatments?

Scalp psoriasis does not necessarily mean you can't have hair treatments, but you do need to be careful. Certain things that do not touch the scalp – such as highlights – should be fine, and treatments that do touch the scalp (such as perms and dyes) usually require a 'patch test' to be done in advance, to make sure you do not have a reaction. If there is broken skin on the scalp then it is not advisable to have dyes or perms applied. It is always a good idea to discuss your scalp psoriasis with your hairdresser, who should have up to date information about possible options, and if in doubt always consult your doctor.

? I am embarrassed to go to the hairdresser

A good hairdresser should have been trained in various scalp conditions, and should be able to help you manage your hair. Telephone in advance and speak to a stylist to explain the situation or try to find a hairdresser who will visit you at home.

? My hair is coming out!

Some people with severe scalp psoriasis see temporary thinning of the hair. This is often because of a build-up of scale, or from scratching.

? Does it go away?

Psoriasis tends to come and go. After treating their scalp psoriasis, some people may be lucky enough not to have a further flare up, and others may have periods of no scalp psoriasis followed by a flare up where it comes back again.

? Helpful hints

- Brush and comb hair gently and regularly
- Buy some pillow case protectors or keep a supply of old pillow cases for times when you are using treatments
- Give all treatments a good chance to work - weeks rather than days
- Always read the instructions carefully on all treatments, as they can differ in how they should be applied
- Tell your GP or Dermatologist if any treatment is causing you problems or discomfort
- Try different hairstyles to cover any psoriasis on the hairline
- Try using an oil to soften the scalp and make scaling easier to lift - olive or coconut oil for example
- Wearing light coloured clothes on the top half of your body will help to disguise falling scales
- Keep up to date with new treatments - the Psoriasis Association has details.

More information

More information on treatments for scalp psoriasis is available from the Psoriasis Association.

The information in this resource is not intended to replace that of a healthcare professional. If you have any concerns or questions about your treatment, do discuss this with your doctor. Always read the instructions that come with a treatment or medication to ensure you are using it correctly.