



EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF
DERMATOLOGY AND VENEREOLOGY

Information Leaflet for Patients

PSORIASIS CAN BE HEREDITARY

The aim of this leaflet

This leaflet is designed to help you understand more about how psoriasis can be hereditary, and that it is important to talk about with family members. It tells you about how your children can recognize psoriasis if it does develop, the importance of appropriate skin care, and why it is important to talk about related shame or embarrassment.

PSORIASIS CAN BE HEREDITARY

Why is it important to talk with family members about psoriasis being hereditary?

Children may inherit the disease from parents affected by psoriasis. Parents are often worried about how to discuss this with their children, not only out of fear of how they will react, but also fear that their child/children may experience the same difficulties as they did.

It is of utmost importance to have an open dialogue with your children about the possibility that they develop psoriasis. You will usually be their first source of information. Talk calmly about the risks: if only one parent has psoriasis, your child has a 30% increased risk of developing psoriasis. If both parents are affected by psoriasis, this increases up to 75%. Yet, it's still not possible how to predict who will develop psoriasis. Most importantly, be open and honest about the disease by setting an example of how to deal with psoriasis. Like many issues in parenting, your child will mainly remember your example rather than your advice!

Is it possible to perform genetic tests for psoriasis?

Psoriasis has a hereditary component and can appear more than once in a family. However, it's still not possible to test for this, since many genes are found to be associated with the development of psoriasis and new ones are identified almost annually. Unlike some other genetic diseases, it's not just one faulty gene, but a combination of specific genetic combinations, your environment, and your immune system.

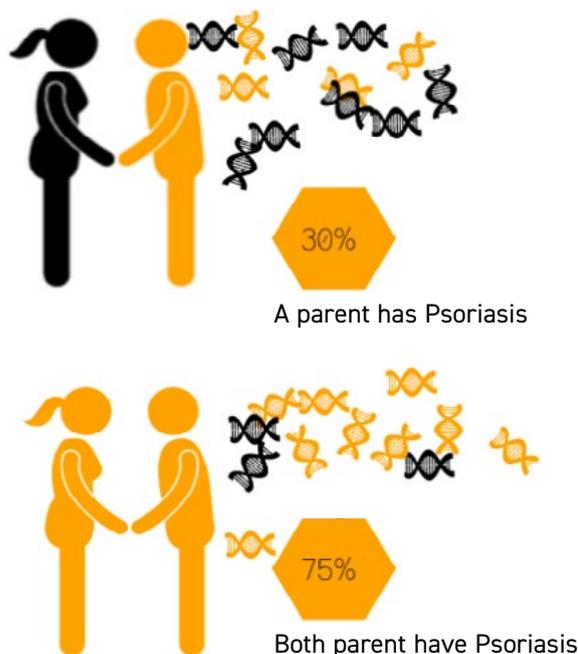
When can psoriasis develop in your child's life?

Let your children know that psoriasis can develop at any time during their life. It is important for them to quickly recognize the symptoms and to see a clinician. This will facilitate diagnosis and improve acceptance of it. A good relationship with your clinician will also increase your child's self-confidence.

Why is skin care important for your child?

It's important to teach your children the importance of appropriate skin care, with or without psoriasis, as the skin is an important organ which needs to be taken care of from the inside and outside. This includes the prevention of injuries, sunburns, and irritation, while avoiding aggressive products. Teach them the importance of skin hydration through using creams and drinking sufficient water. In addition, a healthy lifestyle with a balanced diet and exercise will also help them in the short and long term. More importantly, teach them valuable coping strategies for stress as this will help to control flares during stressful periods.

Psoriasis and genetics



Why it is important to talk about related shame or embarrassment?

When your child has psoriasis, you may want to hide the spots to minimize embarrassment. This will lead your child to believe that they should be ashamed of psoriasis. Unfortunately, this may increase the burden of disease for your child, making them afraid to show their psoriasis. If you notice any behavioral changes since the onset of psoriasis, try having a light conversation with your child to discuss any feelings of shame or fears. If you fail to be able to communicate about this, do not hesitate to involve a psychologist. You may also want to consider involving their school in the dialogue, since they may see another side of your child. Let the school know which difficulties your child may face from psoriasis. For instance, itch may affect

your child's concentration significantly, but may be too embarrassing to talk about in front of a class. Lastly, if you have a teenager who suffers from psoriasis, you need to help them understand that it is very important to build a good relationship with their clinician at that age already, especially when acne may be involved.

In conclusion, it is essential to talk openly about psoriasis, and this will definitely help your child accept the disease.

Don't treat psoriasis as taboo, as psoriasis is nobody's fault.

Not talking about it can be even more traumatizing. ■