

### What can I do myself?

Everyday habits which negatively influence the disease also reduce the chances of successful treatment. Therefore obesity, smoking, excessive consumption of alcohol and stress should be avoided.

Tight clothing and taking excessively long baths can worsen the appearance of the skin. At the same time, the skin should be consistently replenished by using non-allergenic skincare products.

And right in line with the principle “together we are stronger”, it is advisable to join self-help groups at the beginning.

Psychotherapeutic advice can help.

### Self-help group

#### SHG-Forum Psoriasis

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[www.forumpsoriasis.at](http://www.forumpsoriasis.at)  
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### For further information

Öffentliches Gesundheitsportal Österreichs  
 (Austrian public health portal)  
<https://www.gesundheit.gv.at>

Package leaflets of medicines that are approved in Austria:  
<https://aspreister.basg.gv.at>

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DOCTOR'S STAMP

#### Project:

Brief information on Psoriasis

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# Brief information on PSORIASIS

- ✓ Important information compiled by doctors and concerned persons
- ✓ An ideal preparation for the consultation with your doctor
- ✓ So that no questions remain unanswered

## Psoriasis

This information leaflet serves to provide a brief overview of the disease and of treatment options for psoriasis.

## What is psoriasis?

Psoriasis is a chronic inflammatory non-contagious skin disease that is caused by malfunctioning of the immune system.

The disease proceeds in phases; in 20-40% of cases, joints are affected.

There are many factors relating to the cause (abnormal regulation of the immune system, hereditary, etc.), but it has not been fully clarified yet.

## When does psoriasis occur?

The disease usually occurs between the ages of 15 and 25, or after the age of 40. Around 300,000 people are affected by psoriasis in Austria.

## Symptoms

The typical changes to the skin which arise are clearly outlined, slightly raised, reddish, itchy patches (plaques), which are usually covered by silvery white scales.

Commonly affected areas include elbows, knees, the lower spine and the fold below the buttocks.

However, the disease can also manifest itself at the armpits, in the fold below the female breast, at the genitals, in the navel area as well as on hair-covered scalps and nails.

## Diagnosis

Psoriasis usually manifests itself in a typical manner; therefore it is seldom necessary to take a skin sample for examination under the microscope.

A supplementary patient interview (medical history) is carried out to determine the potential involvement of the joints and of conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity and heart disease, since these often occur together with psoriasis.

## What can trigger it?

- Recreational drugs (alcohol, nicotine, etc.)
- Infections (usually streptococci)
- Hormonal changes (puberty / pregnancy / menopause)
- Mechanical, physical stimuli (bruises, injuries, etc.)
- Medicines
- Mental strain / stress
- Climatic conditions

## What happens in the case of non-treatment?

Stigmatisation and the associated restrictions on private life and professional life lead to a reduction in the quality of life. With the progression of an involvement of the joints, permanent damage can occur in the form of restricted mobility.

## Which treatment options are available?

Die Schuppenflechte ist nicht ansteckend und Psoriasis is non-contagious and incurable. However, its symptoms can be alleviated by means of consistent treatment. The choice of treatment depends on the patient's age, the affected areas of the body, the level of severity and possible

accompanying conditions (arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease, cardiovascular disease and diabetes).

## Non-medical treatment

- Skin care to improve the protective function of the skin and to prevent drying out, e.g. lipid replenishing oil baths, non-fragrant shower oils, baths with salt and/or other active substances, greasy ointments and creams
- Phototherapy: Here, the skin is exposed to ultraviolet light

## Medication for external use (for light to moderate symptoms)

e.g.: cortisone (anti-inflammatory), vitamin D<sub>3</sub> derivatives, calcineurin inhibitors.

## Medication for internal use (for fairly serious to severe symptoms)

Systemic therapy (e.g. methotrexate, ciclosporin and fumaric acid) is effective throughout the body and also on joints. The medicines are administered in the form of tablets, injections or infusions.

Advances in treatment have been made in recent years with the so-called biologicals (injections and infusions) and PDE4 inhibitors (tablets), which specifically target the psoriasis inflammations and have resulted in a remarkably improved rate of successful therapy.

Please note, however, that all medicines can lead to undesirable side effects. Speak about this with your doctor, and read the package leaflet that accompanies the medication prescribed to you.