

INVERSE PSORIASIS

OVERVIEW

Inverse psoriasis first shows up as very red lesions in body folds. It may appear smooth and shiny. Many people have another type of psoriasis elsewhere on the body.



SYMPTOMS

Inverse psoriasis is found in the armpits, groin, under the breasts and body. It is particularly subject to irritation from rubbing and sweating because of its location in skin folds and tender areas. It usually lacks the scale associated with plaque psoriasis due to the moist environment. It is more common in overweight people and people with deep skin folds.

TREATMENT

Treatment can be difficult due to the sensitivity of skin in these areas. Steroid creams and ointments are considered very effective, but they should not be occluded (covered) with plastic dressings. Overuse or misuse of steroids can result in side effects such as thinning of the skin and stretch marks. The skin is already thinner in areas that typically have inverse psoriasis. This increases the risk of side effects from topically applied agents (irritation if the topical contains elements that are irritating, e.g, salicylic acid, stretch marks from use of corticosteroids, etc.

Because these areas are prone to yeast and fungal infections, doctors may test for infection. If it is present, they may use diluted topical steroids in combination with other medications. An example is 1% or 2% hydrocortisone with anti-yeast or anti-fungal agents.

Other topical agents, such as calcipotriene (brand name Dovonex), coal tar or anthralin, can be somewhat effective in treating psoriasis in skin folds. However, they may also be irritating. They should be used with caution and under the direction of a doctor. People with severe inverse psoriasis may occasionally require systemic medications to control the condition.

Tacrolimus (brand name Protopic) and pimecrolimus (brand name Elidel) are two topical medications approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of eczema. Many dermatologists have found they work well for psoriasis lesions in the skin folds.

Sometimes a product called Castellani's Paint is used to treat inverse psoriasis. This product is prescribed by a doctor and compounded by a pharmacist or bought over the counter as brand name Castederm. It is a liquid that can be painted on the affected skin. It can help to dry the moist lesions of psoriasis in skin folds. The use of powders may also help to dry the moist lesions. Some people use creams at night and powders in the morning.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact a National Psoriasis Foundation health educator if you need more information by calling 800.723.9166 or emailing education@psoriasis.org.

National Psoriasis Foundation educational materials are medically reviewed and are not intended to replace the counsel of a physician. The Psoriasis Foundation does not endorse any medications, products or treatments for psoriasis or psoriatic arthritis and advises you to consult a physician before initiating any treatment.