

What is genital psoriasis?

Flexural psoriasis occurs in skin folds, armpits, under the breasts, between the buttocks and in the groin area where it can affect the genitals. It appears as red shiny skin without the usual silver scaling and it may feel tight and sore especially at the edges where it meets normal skin. It can cause discomfort and difficulties with sexual relations.

What might trigger it off?

It is not easy to pinpoint what triggers genital psoriasis and it can just occur spontaneously. It often occurs where there is flexural psoriasis affecting other parts of the body. However it can occasionally be triggered by: tight clothes which rub the skin, contraceptives - sheaths, caps and spermicides, sanitary towels or tampons, harsh toilet paper, thrush or sexual intercourse.

What should I do?

It is better to seek help from your GP or Consultant for this very sensitive area. Do not try to treat it yourself.

What treatments are available?

Your doctor will prescribe different creams for the genital area where the skin is thinner and therefore more sensitive than other areas of your body. The genital area tends to be warm and moist so treatment is absorbed more readily and therefore does not need to be as strong to be effective. Mild to moderate potency steroids are often used in the genital area and other flexural areas, and because infections with yeasts and bacteria are common in these places they are often combined with anti fungal and anti bacterial agents.

How can I help myself?

When psoriasis affects the genital skin it can be most distressing and as a patient both you and your sexual partner may need reassurance and encouragement. If you and your partner are concerned or put off by genital psoriasis it may be helpful to talk together to your dermatologist or GP.

Psoriasis is not infectious and cannot be transmitted to another person by sexual contact.

Using condoms may be helpful for male patients and women can use lubricating jelly to reduce further aggravation of their condition.