

# Novartis, Ask Your Derm PH raise awareness on pediatric psoriasis and effective treatments to help children manage symptoms, enjoy life

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This was the key message of pediatric dermatologist Dr. Wilsie Walinsundin when she spoke during "Psoriasis in Children and Adolescents: Understand the Disease and Learn about Treatment Options", a webinar organized by Ask Your Derm Philippines and Novartis Healthcare Philippines and livestreamed on Facebook on 21 July 2022 to raise awareness on pediatric psoriasis.

"The effects of psoriasis are more than skin deep. Parents play an important role in helping their children cope with the effects of psoriasis. They should validate what the child is feeling and assure them that there are treatment options available," said Dr. Wilsie Walinsundin.

## Understanding pediatric psoriasis

Citing a study on pediatric psoriasis, Dr. Walinsundin noted that psoriasis plaques on visible areas such as the face, extremities, or scalp could lead to stigmatization or shame, social isolation, risk-taking behavior, poor academic performance, and bullying. People living with psoriasis are also at higher risk of developing serious comorbidities, including arthritis, cardiovascular diseases, metabolic syndrome, inflammatory bowel disease and depression.<sup>1</sup>

Psoriasis is a chronic, non-communicable, painful, disfiguring and disabling disease for which there is no cure and with great negative impact on patients' quality of life. Psoriasis commonly affects the skin and nails. Plaque psoriasis (psoriasis vulgaris) is the most common type of psoriasis, affecting between 58% and 97% of all patients. It manifests as inflammatory red, sharply demarcated, raised, dry, differently sized plaques, usually covered by silvery or white scales. Plaque psoriasis typically involves the scalp and the area behind the ears, the extensor surfaces of the forearms and shins (especially elbows and knees), trunk, face, palms, soles and nails.<sup>1</sup>

Misconceptions about psoriasis abound, adding to the social stigma attached to the disease. "Psoriasis is neither an allergy nor an infection, and therefore is not contagious. It is a chronic autoimmune condition, meaning that the immune system mistakenly attacks healthy skin cells," explained Dr. Walinsundin.

"In line with the Novartis Commitment to Patients and Caregivers, we provide educational opportunities that are informed by the patient communities' insights, empower patients to seek the right care, and help healthcare professionals best treat their patients. We invite parents of children living with psoriasis to visit <https://www.novartis.com/ph-en/media-library/pediatric-psoriasis> to learn more about the disease and effective treatments to control it," said Ms. Christine Fajardo, Patient Engagement Head, Novartis Healthcare Philippines.

## Effective treatments are available

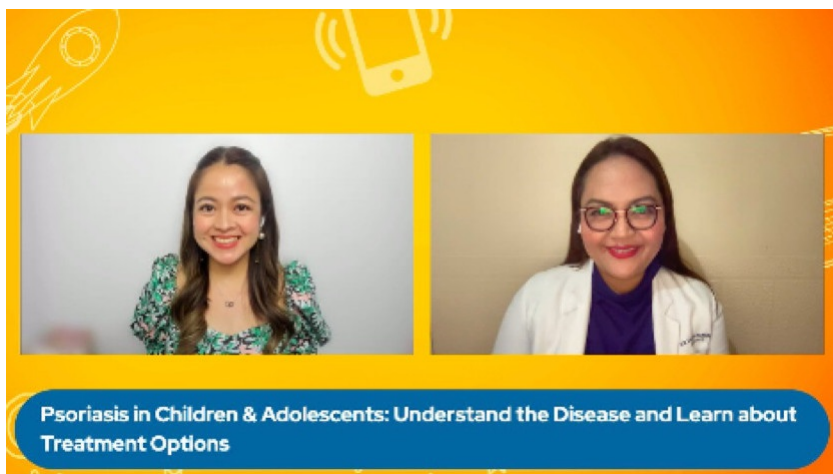
Effective treatments are available to help parents manage their child's psoriasis symptoms so that he or she can enjoy life.

"Your doctor can prescribe different treatment options depending on disease severity. These include topical treatments, like moisturizers, creams, and shampoos. Your doctor may also prescribe a combination of treatments including topicals, UV light therapy, and prescription medications like biologics," Dr. Walinsundin said.

Dr. Walinsundin shared skin care tips for pediatric psoriasis patients. Avoid skin injuries, as cuts and bug bites can cause psoriasis flare-ups. Protect your skin from sun exposure; even a mild sunburn can make psoriasis worse and cause new plaques to form. Avoid long hot showers and baths, as these can worsen skin dryness and irritation. Avoid scratching, which tends to worsen psoriasis. Moisturize your skin daily; creams are preferable to lotions and gels. Follow your doctor's treatment regimen, even if your skin starts to clear.

"When your children start to understand things, please involve them in their treatment regimen. Psoriasis doesn't have to disrupt a child's life. Ask your board-certified dermatologist to draw up the best treatment plan for your child," Dr. Walinsundin said.

To learn more about psoriasis, visit the Ask Your Derm Philippines [microsite](#) and the Novartis Healthcare Philippines [website](#). You may also visit the Ask Your Derm Philippines Facebook Page to watch the "Psoriasis in Children and Adolescents: Understand the Disease and Learn about Treatment Options" [webinar](#).



Ask Your Derm Philippines and Novartis Healthcare Philippines organized a live Facebook event on 21 July 2022 to raise awareness on pediatric psoriasis. The event was hosted by Dr. Gisella Adassa (left), with guest speaker Dr. Wilsie Walinsundin (right).

#### References:

1. WHO Global Report on Psoriasis

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