

Generalized Pustular Psoriasis (GPP)

A rare form of psoriasis, Generalized Pustular Psoriasis (GPP) is a systemic autoimmune disease that causes painful pus-filled bumps to emerge all over the body

Signs & Symptoms



- Sudden flares lasting weeks before resolving
- Widespread pustules with red, itchy, scaly skin
- Often accompanied by fever, chills, fatigue, joint pain, and muscle weakness
- Rarely, pustules may form larger "lakes of pus"
- Serious flares require immediate medical attention and can lead to infection if untreated
- Not infectious or contagious

Risk Factors:



- Age: Most common in 40-50 y/o
- Gender: More common in women
- Ethnicity: More common in US, Sweden & Japan
- Pregnancy: Pregnant women may develop a rare form of GPP called impetigo herpetiformis
- Having plaque psoriasis increases risk of developing GPP
- Infections, rapid tapering of corticosteroids and stress are known triggers
- Associated with chronic conditions like inflammatory polyarthritis and metabolic disorders

GPP vs. Plaque Psoriasis:



- 54% of people with GPP have plaque psoriasis
- GPP: Driven by the innate immune system
- Plaque psoriasis: Driven by the adaptive immune system
- Main difference: Pus-filled pustules in GPP vs. raised, scaly plaques in plaque psoriasis

Complications:



- There is a risk of serious complications such as infection, sepsis, hypovolemia, loss of thermoregulation, metabolic disturbances, acute respiratory distress syndrome, and organ failure

Causes:



- Exact cause is unknown but it is linked to genetic mutations in the pathway that regulates inflammation
- Overactive inflammatory response causes skin damage and inflammation

Treatment Options:



- Many treatments for psoriasis are also used to treat GPP
- Non-Pharmacological: Emollients, moisturizers, IV fluids, pain management
- Topical agents: Calcipotriol, Tacrolimus, topical steroids
- Phototherapy: usually in combination with other treatments
- Antibiotics in the case of secondary bacterial infection
- Non-biologic agents: Cyclosporin, Methotrexate, oral retinoids (acitretin)
- Biologic agents: adalimumab, infliximab, etanercept, brodalumab, secukinumab, ixekizumab, bimekizumab, guselkumab, risankizumab, ustekinumab, anakinra, canakinumab, gevokizuma
- Spesolimab is the only medication approved by Health Canada to treat GPP

How to Support Someone with GPP:



- Provide emotional and practical support
- Encourage timely treatment
- Be flexible and understanding
- Assist with tasks like medication pickup or transport

Living with GPP



- Physical: Pain, itchiness, discomfort
- Emotional: Anxiety, depression, social stigma, reduced quality of life
- Support: Rely on family, friends and community groups
- Healthcare: Seek care from an experienced dermatologist
- Lifestyle: Eat healthy, manage stress, limit alcohol, exercise

For more information:



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