



Is Psoriasis an Autoimmune Disease?

by NEWLIFEOUTLOOK TEAM

What Is an Autoimmune Disease?

Did you know there are approximately 50 million people suffering from autoimmune disease in the United States? Moreover, 75 percent of them are women. Such a huge number of people are affected, yet there is still a lack of understanding about these diseases.

The American Autoimmune Diseases Association (AARDA) reports that there are 80 to 100 discovered autoimmune diseases, all of which are chronic. These diseases can also be life-threatening, and affect many different parts of the body.

When it's doing its job as it should, your immune system will fight off invading agents that may get you sick. An autoimmune disease forms when your immune system begins fighting and damaging your own healthy cells instead.

In the case of psoriasis, your immune system attacks your cells and causes inflammation, which makes your skin cells work harder. Instead of old cells falling off, they multiply and build up to form the scaly plaques characteristic of psoriasis.

When dealing with an autoimmune disease, it's usually a frustrating process trying to get a diagnosis. But because of the way psoriasis manifests on the outside of your body, it's easier to spot.

Typically, because so many of these illness share symptoms and people can have more than one at once, diagnosis is incredibly difficult.

Common symptoms between autoimmune diseases are fatigue, fever and general malaise. A period of time where your symptoms are exacerbated is called a flare-up — they can last days, weeks, or even months.

These are very exhausting and painful for sufferers. When symptoms are finally under control again, it is known as remission.

It is unclear what causes autoimmune diseases, and the cure for them is unknown. Symptoms can be managed with proper medical care and a healthy lifestyle, but unfortunately these illnesses are with you for life.

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a newLifeoutlook infographic

There are currently more than **80 KNOWN AUTOIMMUNE DISEASES** all of which are chronic, some life-threatening.ⁱ

UP TO 50 MILLION AMERICANS suffer from autoimmune disease.ⁱⁱ

75% OF THOSE ARE WOMENⁱⁱⁱ

BUT WHAT EXACTLY IS AN AUTOIMMUNE DISEASE?

A "normal" immune system attacks foreign agents to protect your body against disease. But with autoimmune disease, your immune system mistakes healthy tissues for foreign ones and attacks them instead.^{iv}

The cause of this is unknown, but it is believed autoimmunity can be triggered by:^v



BACTERIA



VIRUSES



DRUGS



TOXINS

What are the Most Common Autoimmune Diseases?^{vi}

- ★ Lupus
- ★ Multiple Sclerosis
- ★ Rheumatoid Arthritis
- ★ Celiac Disease
- ★ Psoriasis
- ★ Hashimoto's Disease
- ★ Sjögren's Syndrome
- ★ Type 1 Diabetes

COMMON SYMPTOMS

Many autoimmune conditions occur simultaneously and share similar symptoms, making diagnosis very difficult.

Common symptoms of many autoimmune diseases include:^{vii}

- ★ Fatigue
- ★ Fever
- ★ Malaise

Many parts of the body are affected, so symptoms are widely varied. Flare-ups are when these symptoms worsen, sometimes for days, weeks or months at a time.

You can ease symptoms with medical interventions and by following a healthy lifestyle, but autoimmune diseases have no cure.

Resources

- i <http://www.aarda.org/autoimmune-information/autoimmune-statistics/>
- ii <http://www.aarda.org/autoimmune-information/autoimmune-disease-in-women/>
- iii <http://www.healthline.com/health/autoimmune-disorders#Overview1>
- iv <http://www.aarda.org/autoimmune-information/questions-and-answers/>
- v <http://www.healthline.com/health/autoimmune-disorders#Types2>
- vi <http://www.healthline.com/health/autoimmune-disorders#Causes3>

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