**What is Psoriasis?**

When most people think of psoriasis, they think of a condition that affects the outer layers of the skin. However, the condition is something that begins underneath the skin. In fact, it is believed to be the result of an overactive immune system. Psoriasis is an autoimmune disease that causes rough sections of skin called plaques. Thankfully, there are treatment options available as well as techniques that you can use to learn to live with psoriasis.

**It Starts Underneath the Skin**

To truly understand the origin of psoriasis, it may be helpful to examine what is taking place inside your body. For an individual with normal skin, their body generally takes between 28 and 30 days to create new skin cells and to get rid of the old ones.

However, an individual with plaque psoriasis has an overactive immune system. This can lead to skin inflammation, which causes the skin to reproduce at a faster-than-normal rate. New skin is created and brought to the surface in a matter of three or four days as opposed to the normal 28 to 30 days.

The problem is that the human body cannot get rid of existing skin cells that fast. So new skin cells begin to pile up on top of old ones. This accumulation of skin cells is what leads to the formation of red, thick, itchy patches of skin that are referred to as plaques.

**What are the Causes?**

While a lot is known about the process that leads to psoriasis, the exact cause of the disease still remains unknown. Genetics seem to play a role. One third of individuals who have the condition reported that they have a relative with the disease.

Other known psoriasis triggers include:

* Certain infections
* Certain medications
* Stress
* Obesity
* Smoking

**What Treatments are Available?**

While there is no cure for psoriasis, there are treatment options available that may help to manage the symptoms. The two main types of medications used are biologics and systemics. Topical medications may also be used, however. Phototherapy and XTRAC® laser therapy may also help to alleviate the symptoms associated with the condition.

Psoriasis is a chronic, lifelong condition. However, it is a condition that you may be able to control while still leading a productive life. During a consultation at Dermatology Associates, our team of medical professionals can evaluate your condition and come up with a customized treatment plan for you. We have offices in Norwood, Foxboro and Franklin. Contact us today to schedule your appointment.