

Pityriasis versicolor

Pityriasis versicolor is a commonly encountered fungal skin condition in the society. It is caused by a fungus named *Malassezia furfur*.

1. How is it caused?

- Usually there are fungi and bacteria in the skin microenvironment known as commensals. *Malassezia furfur* is a commensal fungus. Under certain conditions such as extreme temperatures, moisture, immune deficiencies there is excess growth of the fungus resulting in pityriasis versicolor. This is not a genetic condition and is not infectious.

2. What are the clinical features?

- Hypopigmented (whitish/light colored) or hyperpigmented (dark brown) patch or multiple patches
- The rash can be scaly when the skin lesions are rubbed.
- The rash can be slightly itchy.
- The rash can occur anywhere in the body, but the predominant sites are neck, back and front of the chest.
- Can be seen in any age group. However, younger population is commonly affected.

3. How to diagnose pityriasis versicolor?

A dermatologist can clinically diagnose this condition. Rarely, in clinically vague circumstances there are special tests that will aid in the diagnosis.

4. Treatment

For the majority, the skin rash clears with topical antifungal therapy such as antifungal cream and shampoo E.g.: Ketoconazole cream /shampoo. Occasionally pills will be prescribed if needed by the doctor.

5. Can it be cured?

Yes, with the correct treatment pityriasis versicolor can be completely cured.

6. Things to know following treatment.

- Even after proper treatment the light-colored hue of the skin can persist for a few months.
- Even after complete resolution, pityriasis versicolor can recur.

