

# Patient Information for Acquired ichthyosis - Immunocompromised, HIV and AIDS

## Overview

Acquired ichthyosis is a rare skin condition that appears in adulthood. It is usually caused by a medical condition or the use of certain medications. The affected skin is very dry, rough, and can look like fish scales.

Ichthyosis can be caused by systemic illnesses such as cancer, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection, diabetes, kidney disease, thyroid disease, connective tissue disease, sarcoidosis, leprosy, and bone marrow transplant.

Acquired ichthyosis may also be brought on by drugs, including some cholesterol-lowering agents, antipsychotic medications, antidepressants, and cancer therapies. Cimetidine (used to treat acid reflux) and allopurinol (used to treat gout and kidney stones) may also cause these skin changes..

Symptoms usually go away after the underlying illness is treated or the medication is no longer being used.

## Who's At Risk

A person with a systemic illness, or taking medication for a systemic illness, is at risk of developing acquired ichthyosis. People with lowered immune systems, such as HIV-infected patients, are also at risk.

## Signs & Symptoms

Acquired ichthyosis is very dry skin that appears in adulthood, especially after being diagnosed with a systemic illness. The affected skin has a "fish scale" appearance with rough patches that may be white, brown, or gray. Ichthyosis typically affects the trunk, limbs, and scalp.

## Self-Care Guidelines

A daily skin care routine to keep your skin well-hydrated and exfoliated can ease symptoms. Frequent, regular use of moisturizing creams is recommended.

## When to Seek Medical Care

Contact your health care provider if your skin splits or cracks, as that can lead to infection, or if your self-care is not providing adequate relief.

## Treatments Your Physician May Prescribe

To reduce scale, your doctor might prescribe or recommend a cream or ointment that contains one of the following:

- Alpha hydroxy acid

- Salicylic acid
- Urea