

Pityriasis Alba (Patches of Lighter Skin)

What is pityriasis alba?

Pityriasis alba is a harmless and common childhood skin condition of patches of lighter skin color.

What is the cause?

The cause of this skin condition is not known. It may have to do with dry skin or chemicals that come into contact with the skin.

The lighter patches of skin are more common in the summer, but they can happen at any time of year.

What are the symptoms?

The patches of lighter skin are dry and scaly. They are most often on the face and sometimes on the neck, upper part of the chest, or arms.

How is it diagnosed?

Your healthcare provider will ask about your child's medical history and activities and examine your child. Your provider may look at your child's skin under a microscope to see if another problem, like ringworm (skin fungus), may be causing the patches of lighter skin.

How is it treated?

After several weeks your child's skin color will gradually go back to normal without treatment. Lotions and moisturizers may help. Nonprescription hydrocortisone cream may also help the patches go away more quickly. Don't use hydrocortisone cream on the face for long periods of time (months) without first talking with your healthcare provider.

How can I take care of my child?

Once the skin is back to its normal color, use skin lotions and moisturizers to help lower the chance that the patches will return.

Ask your healthcare provider:

- How and when you will hear your child's test results
- How long it will take your child to recover from this condition
- How to take care of your child at home
- What symptoms or problems you should watch for and what to do if your child has them

Make sure you know when you should bring your child back for a checkup.

Written by Robert Brayden, MD, Professor of Pediatrics, University of Colorado.

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