

Facts About Hidradenitis Suppurativa (HS).

- HS is NOT an infection. It is an immune disease.
- HS is NOT contagious, so it cannot be spread from one person to another.
- HS is NOT a result of poor hygiene or washing habits.
- HS is NOT rare. In fact, it affects nearly 2% of the population.
- HS is NOT caused by smoking or obesity, but quitting smoking, changing diet, or losing weight have helped some people.
- HS affects all sexes, ages, races, and ethnicities. However, it is more common in young adults, African Americans, and women.
- 1 of every 3 people with HS also has a family member with HS.



Mild HS

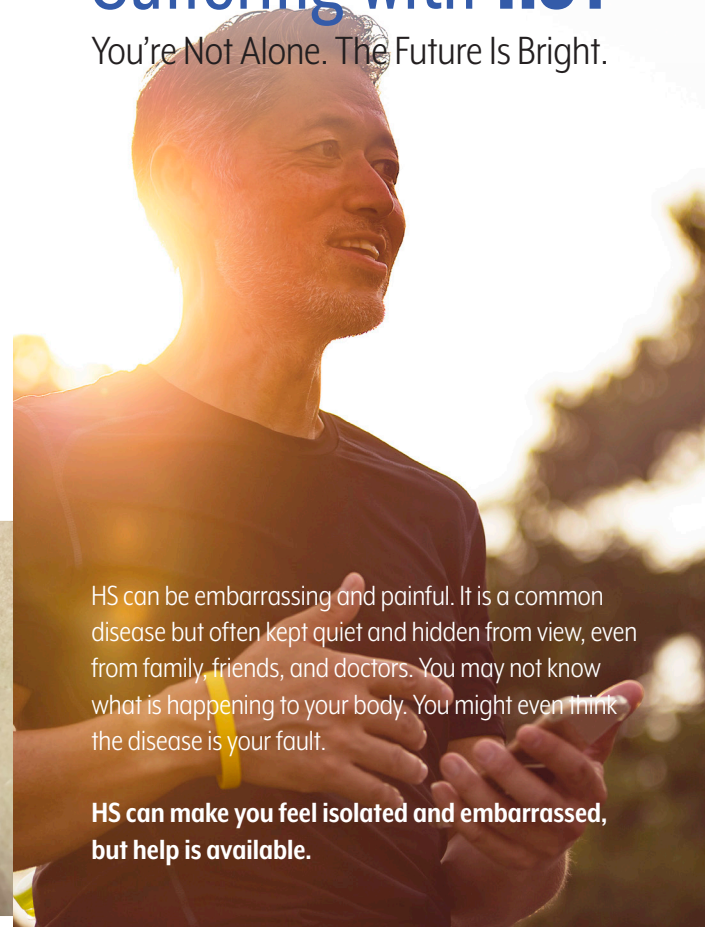
Because of its appearance and location, HS is frequently misdiagnosed as acne, folliculitis (inflammation of the hair root), a skin infection, or a sexually transmitted disease.

HS is a chronic condition that does not yet have a cure. However, treatment is available to help reduce flares and improve your quality of life.

If you think you might be suffering from HS, the good news is: help is available. The HS Foundation is on your side. Visit our website for more information and patient resources.
www.hs-foundation.org

Suffering with HS?

You're Not Alone. The Future Is Bright.



HS can be embarrassing and painful. It is a common disease but often kept quiet and hidden from view, even from family, friends, and doctors. You may not know what is happening to your body. You might even think the disease is your fault.

HS can make you feel isolated and embarrassed, but help is available.

HS 
Foundation

Those painful, embarrassing, recurring bumps might be **Hidradenitis Suppurativa (HS)**

Visit the Hidradenitis Suppurativa Foundation for patient resources and reliable information
www.hs-foundation.org

Participate in a clinical trial
www.clinicaltrials.gov

Connect with people (or others) with HS through support groups like Hope for HS
www.hopeforhs.org

Or follow us on social media to learn more
www.facebook.com/HidradenitisSuppurativaFoundation
www.twitter.com/HSForg

HS is a chronic inflammatory skin condition that causes painful lumps and often favors the folds of skin, such as the underarms or in the folds of the leg, but can also happen on the chest, back, or butt. It is often mistaken for infected follicles, abscesses, boils, or cysts.

HS is more common than you think, just underdiagnosed until now. The HS Foundation is committed to encouraging, supporting and celebrating people living with HS, while leading efforts for advocacy, education, and research.

What is Hidradenitis Suppurativa (HS)?

HS is an immune disease that causes recurring boils in the folds of your skin. Usually, that means your armpits, chest, breasts, groin, stomach, back or sides, or buttocks. It's also known as acne inversa.

HS begins with skin-colored or red lumps which come up suddenly, increase in size, are itchy or sore, then burst and drain. When they heal, they can leave scars. Some lumps may come back in the same spot.

HS can be painful, embarrassing, and emotional. It often comes and goes in flares but can be constant for other people.

What Causes HS?

HS isn't anyone's fault. There is a growing amount of research on HS, which is helping us to better understand what HS is and how we can treat it.

- Your immune system is designed to be almost inactive when things are going fine, but it is always on the lookout for threats. **For people with HS, your immune system is overactive, not defective.**
- Bacteria exist on everyone's skin. For people with HS, the skin cells overreact to some bacteria and cause inflammation, which causes the skin cells to stick to the inside of the hair follicle.
- When the hair follicle skin cells get inflamed, they block the opening. They build up, widening and weakening the hair follicle. The follicles may break open under the skin and trigger even more massive skin inflammation.

People of all ages develop HS, but it typically starts around puberty, suggesting that hormones may play a role. Researchers and people with HS are working hard to improve our understanding of what causes HS.

Treatment Options

A number of medicines and procedures are available to treat HS. The most important step is to find a doctor who knows about HS and can help you decide which treatment options are right for you.

Every person with HS is different.

Talk to your doctor about the best treatment for your HS.

<https://www.hs-foundation.org/hs-specialty-clinics/>

Some of the medicines and procedures that may be helpful include:

- Topical medicines: This includes creams and washes
- Oral antibiotics: Antibiotics might be used one at a time or in combinations
- Hormonal therapies: Spironolactone or oral contraceptives are used for females with HS
- Steroids: These aren't as safe over long periods of time, so are used to treat flares
- Biologics: Injected into the skin or through an IV, these medicines target a few of the chemicals from the immune system that cause HS.
- Procedures: Laser hair removal by medical professionals with specific experience treating HS

Some surgeries may also be an option:

- Incision and drainage (I&D) provides fast, short-term relief, but the HS is likely to come back.
- Deroofing is a little bigger than an I&D but is more likely to get rid of a lesion. It involves removing the skin on top of the lesion and scraping out the HS inflammation that keeps the spot active.
- Excision, which means removing the section of skin that has HS (usually long-standing, stubborn spots).

Visit the HS Decision Aid to make an educated decision about medication, treatment, or surgery for your HS.

<https://www.informed-decisions.org/hidradenitispda.php>

Related Conditions

HS can increase your chance of having other conditions at the same time, whether in the skin or other parts of your body. This means it's important to have a primary care provider to manage your whole health. Conditions HS can be associated with include:

- High cholesterol, heart disease and stroke
- Type 2 diabetes mellitus
- Depression and anxiety
- Arthritis, which causes stiffness and pain in joints
- Inflammatory bowel disease (including Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis)
- Acne and pilonidal sinus/cyst
- Polycystic ovarian syndrome

“Many people will only ever have a mild disease. However, mild HS can still be extremely painful and make daily activities, work, and intimate relationships difficult.”

Lifestyle Modifications

Some people with HS smoke cigarettes and some are overweight or obese. While quitting smoking and managing our weight have been shown to help us live longer, there is little research on how they affect HS. In other words, losing weight or quitting smoking may help improve HS symptoms in some people but not others.

The same applies to dietary recommendations. Avoiding dietary triggers may help some people but will not necessarily help all HS patients.

Friction, irritation and shaving often worsen HS symptoms. Wearing loose-fitted, breathable clothing and fabrics may help.

Some medications may worsen HS symptoms, such as lithium, testosterone, and some birth control medications, especially progesterone-only birth control. In some studies, zinc supplementation has been shown to help HS, however, it can have some side effects long-term. Talk to your doctor before starting or stopping any medication.