

DISSEMINATED SUPERFICIAL ACTINIC POROKERATOSIS

Disseminated superficial actinic porokeratosis (DSAP) is a long and fancy name for a skin condition that causes dry, scaly, red to brown spots on certain areas of the body. I will describe the terms used in this condition's name. Disseminated shows that the spots are spread out on the body usually the arms and legs, superficial means that they are just on the surface of the skin, actinic means that it is related to sun exposure, and porokeratosis describes how the skin looks under the microscope. The reddish brown spots are generally seen on the outer parts of the arms and legs but they can occasionally show up on other sun exposed areas of the body. This is not a serious condition and is thought to be due to an abnormal sensitivity to the sun.

It is thought that a certain amount of accumulated sun exposure is needed to bring this condition out. It is more common among individuals who are fair skinned and of northern European descent. The average age in which people first notice DSAP is about forty, and the incidence increases with age. Women are affected more than man.

Once a spot of DSAP forms it may enlarge to form a ring or circle. The spots do tend to get larger up to a point and can itch after sun exposure. The condition usually improves during the winter months due to less outdoor exposure. Occasionally a small skin test is required to make sure that your condition is DSAP. Any spots that develop changes such as excessive crusting or bleeding may need to be checked out further.

Once the diagnosis has been established the best thing to do is to minimize further sun exposure by wearing protective clothing and using sunscreens. There are several treatments available for DSAP. Some treatments are used to treat all of the lesions. Some treatments are used for individual lesions. The individual lesion treatment includes liquid nitrogen and various surface surgical procedures.

DSAP is a common condition which is not an indication of a serious problem. There is effective treatment available. If you have any other questions please do not hesitate to ask before you leave the office.