

LICHEN PLANUS

Lichen planus is a skin problem of unknown cause. It produces red to purple slightly scaly spots in the skin. Most commonly, these are located on the arms and legs. In certain cases it can involve other areas including the mouth. Lichen planus is a descriptive term, which was initially used because of the resemblance of the skin problem to a certain type of a lichen plant. The planus part of the name refers to the fact that the bumps are flat on the top.

Unfortunately the root cause of lichen planus is not known. At times it can be a reaction in the skin to an internal medicine or infection. Fortunately lichen planus is a self-limited skin condition that tends to clear completely with time.

This problem can be controlled quite well in most cases. Depending on the severity of the eruption, creams, pills or shots are used. At times, a type of phototherapy known as PUVA is used, if all else fails.

Lichen planus is not cancer, an infection, or serious. It is a bothersome problem because of the itching and the marks it can leave in the skin. Even after it is treated the marks where the individual spots were can remain for many months.

If you have any other questions about this condition, please do not hesitate to ask me.