

MORPHEA

What is morphea?

Morphea, also known as localized scleroderma, is a condition that can cause parts of the skin to develop scar tissue, even without injury. Depending on the area affected, morphea can also affect the tissue underneath the skin like the fat layer, muscle, joints and brain.

Why does morphea happen?

We don't know why some people get morphea and others don't. It seems to be due to the body's immune system mistakenly attacking the skin and other tissues. It is not inherited and not contagious.

What types of morphea are there?

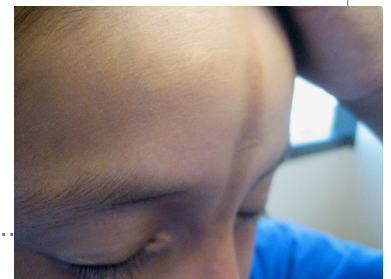
There are a few types of morphea. Linear morphea is the most common in children and shows up as a line of thickened skin on the arms, legs, scalp, or face. When it affects the face or scalp, it is known as 'en coupe de sabre'. Plaque morphea is another type and looks like oval spots that start off pink/red and can become thick and white (like a scar) and brown and soft with time. Other less common forms are generalized and deep morphea.



Plaque morphea

How is morphea treated?

Morphea is usually treated to prevent spread and to preserve function. Small spots don't need treatment but can be treated with steroids creams, vitamin D creams or tacrolimus 0.1% ointment. Linear morphea is usually treated with weekly methotrexate and short-term prednisone. If it is on the face, we might get the ophthalmologist (eye doctors) and neurologists (brain doctors) involved. Most patients with linear morphea are managed with the rheumatologists.



Linear morphea