

# MANAGING YOUR BULLOUS PEMPHIGOID

Bullous pemphigoid is a chronic, autoimmune disease of the skin and mucous membranes. It usually starts as red hives and changes to large blisters. It affects men and women equally, usually those older than 60. Children may also have it.



Blisters are tense and oval or round. They may cause ulcers or sores of the skin and mucous membranes of the mouth, throat, anus, and vagina. Itching can occur. Lower legs, armpits, inner thighs, abdomen, and forearms are affected.



Your doctor makes a diagnosis from a medical history and skin examination. The doctor may want blood tests and a skin biopsy.

## What Is Bullous Pemphigoid?

Bullous pemphigoid is a chronic disease of the skin and mucous membranes. It usually starts as red wheals or swellings (urticaria, or hives). It changes over weeks to months to bullae (large blisters). It can last for a long time or can come back after it goes away. It affects men and women equally, usually those older than 60 years. Children may also have it.

## What Causes Bullous Pemphigoid?

In this autoimmune disorder, the body's own immune system attacks normal parts of the body. This condition may be hereditary but isn't infectious or cancerous.

## What Are the Symptoms of Bullous Pemphigoid?

Blisters are tense and oval or round. They may start on normal skin or red wheals. They may burst and cause ulcers or sores of the skin and mucous membranes of the mouth, throat, anus, and vagina that may hurt. Itching can occur. Usually, lower legs, armpits, inner thighs, abdomen, and forearms have the lesions.

Ulcers can get infected with bacteria, especially if they're scratched.

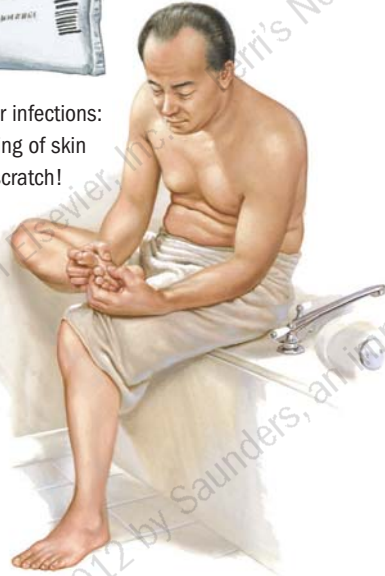
## How Is Bullous Pemphigoid Diagnosed?

The health care provider makes a diagnosis from the medical history and skin examination. The health care provider checks the look of the lesions, tests skin samples, and in some cases, does blood tests. A skin biopsy is often done to confirm the diagnosis. A biopsy involves taking a small piece of skin for additional tests.



Treatment involves having good skin hygiene, preventing skin injury, and counseling. Medicines (steroid creams, lotions, and ointments) can help. Don't stop steroids or immunosuppressants suddenly.

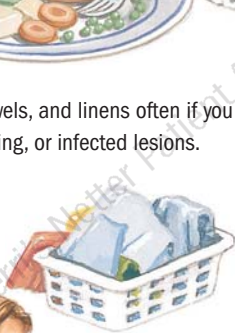
Take care of your skin. Check for infections: redness, pus, and pain or swelling of skin lesions or lymph nodes. Don't scratch!



Eat a good diet. Liquid or soft diets can help pain from mouth blisters with eating or swallowing.



Wash clothing, towels, and linens often if you have oozing, crusting, or infected lesions.



Call your doctor if you have symptoms of infection, worsening lesions, or new lesions or new symptoms. Call if you have fever, lethargy, confusion, or weakness.

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How Is Bullous Pemphigoid Treated?

Treatment depends on where and how severe the lesions are. It involves general measures and medicines.

General measures include having good skin hygiene and preventing skin injury, including scratching. These measures can avoid infections. People who get depressed or have trouble coping with the disorder may need psychological counseling.

The health care provider may prescribe medicines to help inflammation (redness, swelling) and symptoms. They include topical steroid creams, lotions, and ointments. To reduce the risk of side effects, use only the prescribed dosage. Corticosteroids and immunosuppressive drugs are also used, sometimes together.

Mouth or throat lesions can cause pain with eating or swallowing. A liquid or soft diet may be needed.

Cleaning and checking lesions are important to prevent infections.

DOs and DON'Ts in Managing Bullous Pemphigoid:

- ✓ **DO** take your prescribed medicines. Tell your health care provider about all your other medicines, including over-the-counter.
- ✓ **DO** eat a nutritious diet. Liquid or soft diets can help pain with eating or swallowing.
- ✓ **DO** use good skin hygiene to avoid bacterial infections.
- ✓ **DO** check your skin for healing. Watch for symptoms of infection: redness, pus, pain or swelling of skin lesions or lymph nodes, and fever.
- ✓ **DO** wash clothing, towels, and linens often if you have oozing, crusting, or infected lesions.
- ✓ **DO** call your health care provider if you have symptoms of infection, worsening lesions, or new lesions or new symptoms.
- ✓ **DO** call your health care provider if you have fever, lethargy, confusion, or weakness.
- ⊘ **DON'T** stop your medicine or change the dose without asking your health care provider.
- ⊘ **DON'T** take more than the prescribed doses of medicines.
- ⊘ **DON'T** use potent topical steroids on the face or genitals. These areas can be sensitive.
- ⊘ **DON'T** stop steroids or immunosuppressants suddenly. This may cause serious problems, including severe weakness, fatigue, and low blood pressure.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the following source:

• American Academy of Dermatology

Tel: (847) 330-0030

Website: <http://www.aad.org>