



## **Disseminated Superficial Actinic Porokeratosis (DSAP)**

Disseminated superficial actinic porokeratosis (DSAP) is an uncommon skin condition that leads to reddish brown scaly spots. The spots are mostly seen on the arms and legs, but sometimes will show up on the other sun-damaged skin. It is due to an abnormal sun sensitivity leading to pre-cancerous skin cells. It is not a serious condition.

Most cases are inherited, but some occur in people whose immune systems are not working well. DSAP will show up only after sun damage has already occurred; so it is usually seen only in fair-skinned people beyond mid-life. For some reason, mostly women are affected. Once a spot of DSAP forms, it may slowly enlarge to form a ring or circle. The spots seem to grow or itch after sun exposure.

While DSAP is considered pre-cancerous, it seems the changes toward a possible skin cancer (a squamous cell carcinoma) are very slow. Once DSAP has been diagnosed, the best thing you can do is to practice rigorous sun protection to try not to add to the changes toward skin cancer.

Unfortunately, treatment of DSAP is not very satisfactory. Creams such as Retin-A, Tazorac and Efudex offer some help. Most dermatologists advise an exam for skin cancer once or twice per year. The largest and most suspicious spots can be frozen off with liquid nitrogen. Sometimes a more worrisome spot is biopsied.