

HEALTH AWARENESS

Don't Be Fooled By Psoriasis: You Can't Catch It

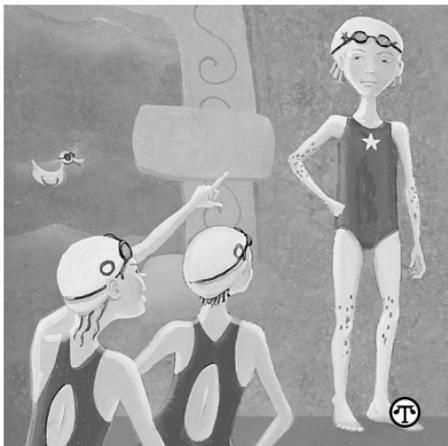
(NAPSA)—A little knowledge and a bit of forethought can help protect many young—and not-so-young—Americans from a distressing form of discrimination.

The problem is that kids are getting kicked out of swimming pools and other play areas—not because of their behavior, but because of how their skin looks.

These children have psoriasis, a noncontagious, chronic disease of the immune system that appears on the skin causing red, scaly patches. Unfortunately, many of the 7.5 million Americans who have psoriasis face discrimination in public places such as hair salons, gyms and swimming pools because others believe the disease is contagious. And many avoid public situations altogether.

To help, the National Psoriasis Foundation works to break down barriers, raise awareness, dispel myths and educate the public about psoriasis. In a recent survey conducted by the Psoriasis Foundation, one in five people with psoriasis report being denied service at a pool in the past 12 months.

“I have gotten into a hot tub or pool and had adults get out once they saw the scales on my arms or legs,” said Ellen Clements, an active volunteer with the National Psoriasis Foundation who was diagnosed with psoriasis in 2005 at age 57. “Even after I tell people



There's no reason to avoid swimming with someone who has psoriasis. The condition is not contagious.

they can't catch it, they still make up an excuse and leave.”

“Many people assume psoriasis is contagious because of the way it looks, and because of that, people living with the disease often face discrimination,” said Randy Beranek, president and CEO of the National Psoriasis Foundation.

Psoriasis Awareness packets, including a fact sheet, posters, postcards and tips, are available for those who would like to participate in raising awareness and educating the public about psoriasis.

To request a packet or for more information, visit www.freetogetinthepool.org or www.psoriasis.org or call (800) 723-9166.