

# What is HS? The facts vs the fiction

Hidradenitis Suppurativa (HS) is a chronic inflammatory skin disease that develops when the hair follicles become blocked.<sup>1</sup> HS might have an impact on simple everyday activities such as sleeping, sitting down, and showering. When living with HS, regular showers can be essential for self-care. But when pressured water hits an open wound, the pain can overshadow the relief.<sup>2,3</sup>

**There are a variety of myths and misconceptions surrounding HS, but it's time we focus on the facts.**



Inspired by patients.  
Driven by science.

Below you will find the information that you need to understand more about what HS really is, and just as importantly, what it is not, to help you navigate your HS journey with confidence.

## The facts. HS is...



A recurring, long-term inflammatory disease of the hair follicles caused by an overactive immune system<sup>4</sup>

Painful, swollen, pus-filled lumps/boils that may connect together (known as tunnelling) and can leak pus<sup>1</sup>

Potentially disruptive to daily life<sup>5</sup>

Manageable with appropriate treatment and/or surgery<sup>6</sup> and through multiple specialists working together<sup>7</sup>

## The fiction. HS isn't...



Contagious<sup>4</sup>

A sexually transmitted infection<sup>4</sup>

Acne<sup>8</sup>

A cyst<sup>9</sup>

An ingrown hair<sup>8</sup>

Caused by an infection<sup>4</sup>

Caused by poor personal hygiene<sup>4</sup>

Caused by being overweight<sup>10</sup>

Curable<sup>11</sup>

Anyone's fault<sup>4</sup>

HS may be more common than you think.

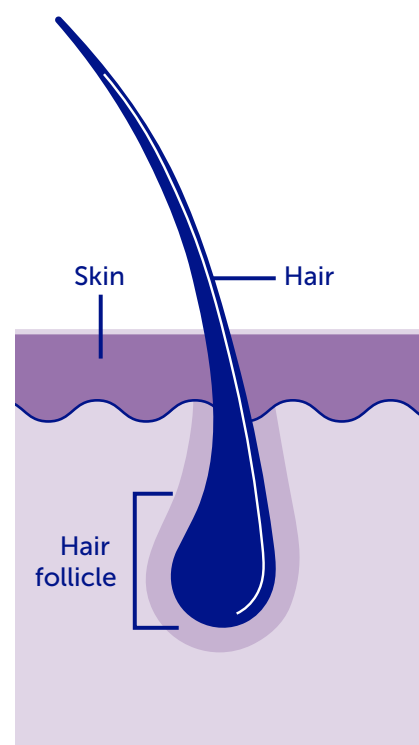
**In Europe, it's estimated that 1% of people have HS.**<sup>12</sup>

And anyone can get it. As with many conditions, the chance of getting HS is thought to be due to a mixture of genetics and environmental factors.<sup>13</sup>



## How does HS occur?

- 1 Every hair on our body grows from a hair follicle<sup>14</sup>
- 2 Usually, skin cells that line the hair follicle fall off at regular intervals and are removed from the hair follicle<sup>14</sup>
- 3 However, in HS, keratin – a naturally occurring protein that makes up hair, skin and nails<sup>15</sup> – blocks hair follicles in certain areas of the body<sup>14</sup>
- 4 Over time, the blockage builds up and causes the hair follicle to swell and eventually burst<sup>14</sup>
- 5 This triggers the immune system in the skin to attack the hair follicle which causes the swollen red lumps and abscesses<sup>14</sup>
- 6 The inflammation produced by the immune system can last for a long time<sup>14</sup>



For more information on how HS occurs, as well as the symptoms and stages of HS, please visit: [www.ucb.com](http://www.ucb.com)

# The importance of getting treatment

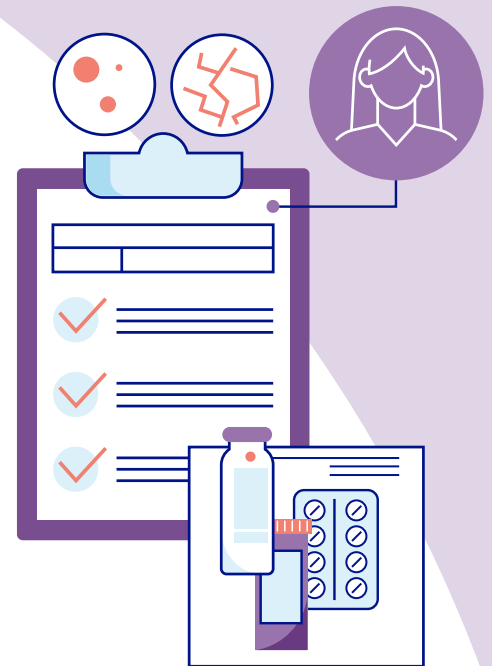
HS is very unlikely to heal on its own. It is important **not to feel ashamed of your symptoms**; getting the right treatment as soon as possible is crucial to prevent your symptoms from getting worse and ensuring a **better overall experience**.<sup>9</sup>

As some people with HS can experience other conditions at the same time, it's important to tell your healthcare provider about **all the symptoms** you may have. These may include joint aches or stiffness, tummy problems, irregular periods, excessive body hair, putting on weight or low mood or anxiety. The sooner you tell your healthcare provider, the quicker you can get the right treatment for all of your symptoms.<sup>16</sup>

HS is manageable with appropriate treatment.<sup>6</sup>

To learn more about the team and types of healthcare professionals involved in HS, visit [www.ucb.com/disease-areas/hidradenitis-suppurativa](http://www.ucb.com/disease-areas/hidradenitis-suppurativa).

Whether you're looking for additional support or further information on HS, we have a range of materials that will help guide you through your HS journey.



From helping you identify your symptoms, to tips and tricks for managing HS, we have you covered. Simply visit us at: [www.ucb.com](http://www.ucb.com)

## References

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