

# Lichen Planus

Lichen planus is an itchy rash that can appear anywhere on the body. Most commonly it affects the **limbs, nails, scalp, mouth** and **genitals**. It is thought to affect around **2% of the population** and is more common in those **over 40 years of age**. It is experienced by men and women equally, although oral lichen planus is more prevalent in women.

The exact cause of the condition is unknown, but it is thought that it is the immune systems response to a virus or environmental trigger. It is not contagious and it is not hereditary. There are a number of different varieties of the condition including; **hypertrophic, atrophic, annular, bullous, erosive/ulcerative, follicular, vesicular, actinic**, and **lichen planus pigmentosus**.

**Oral lichen planus accounts for around 50% of all cases of the condition**, and causes white patches on the soft linings of the mouth, the tongue and the gums. It is usually painless and not itchy. Rarely it can cause mouth ulcers, and gum inflammation.

Lichen planus of the genitals can cause white streaks on the vulva or penis, a rash, and occasionally itchy, red sores. In a minority of cases, scar tissue can form where the rash was.

About **10% of lichen planus sufferers experience symptoms on their nails**, which can cause ridging and sometimes discolouration.

When lichen planus affects the scalp, it can cause an itchy, sore rash, and in extreme cases, patches of hair loss



# Treatment for Lichen Planus

Treatment for lichen planus include antihistamine tablets, steroid creams, steroid tablets, steroid pastes in the mouth, emollients, laser and light therapy, and immune modulators which help the immune counter the damage to the skin. These treatments can be harsh on delicate skins, and steroids can discolour and thin the skin, so you may choose to find natural alternatives.



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