

LICHEN SCLEROSIS ATROPHICUS (LSA)

Lichen sclerosis atrophicus (LSA) is an uncommon skin disorder that can develop in people of all ages but is most common in young children and women. It often occurs in the private area but may develop on any part of the body.

Lichen sclerosis is a long and confusing name, which is simply a description. The term lichen refers to the flat spots that are on the skin. The terms sclerosis and atrophicus refer to the white, somewhat shiny or scar-like appearance of the condition in certain areas.

Lichen sclerosis often starts as small white spots on the skin, which can progress to larger patches of skin that are thin and crinkly. In severe untreated cases, scarring is present. Most patients who have this problem do not have any symptoms. If there are symptoms, it is usually itching. If the problem does itch, chronic rubbing and scratching can create open areas. If the condition occurs in the private area, urination or sexual intercourse can occasionally create problems. In most cases, there are no symptoms at all.

The cause of lichen sclerosis is unknown. It is not contagious. It is not an infection. It is not associated with any other disease. In some cases a small test of the skin is required to confirm the diagnosis.

Many patients with lichen sclerosis do not need any treatment because the symptoms are mild and usually go away with time. If there is itching topical therapy is often prescribed to the affected areas. If lichen sclerosis occurs in the private areas of the skin, specialized treatment is often required. There are also creams but they need to be used properly to obtain maximum benefit and to avoid any side effects. I will individualize your treatment based on your specific problems.

Although lichen sclerosis is not truly curable it is usually entirely controllable. Again, the treatment will be individualized in your case. In most situations the topical medication is used regularly for a period of a few weeks. Thereafter it is tapered to one or two times per week.

If you have any other questions regarding the lichen sclerosis condition please do not hesitate to ask before you leave the office.