



Lichen striatus

What is lichen striatus?

Lichen striatus is an uncommon self-limiting skin rash that occurs mainly in children. It presents as pink raised spots that join together to form one or more dull red slightly scaly linear bands.

Lichen striatus



Why does it occur and who is at risk?

The cause of lichen striatus is unknown. Possibly genetic factors or environmental triggers have a role to play in its development. The eruption affects the lines of Blaschko, which are thought to be embryonic in origin.

Over 50% of cases occur in children aged between 5 and 15 years. It appears in females two or three times as often as in males. It is rare in adults, when it is sometimes known as [acquired blaschkoid dermatitis](#) or [blaschkitis](#).

What does it look like?

Lichen striatus starts as small pink, red or flesh coloured spots that over the course of one or two weeks join together to form a dull red slightly scaly linear band. The band is usually 2mm to 2cm in width and may be a few centimetres in length or may extend the entire length of the limb. Sometimes there are two parallel bands. Lesions occur most commonly on one arm or leg but can affect the neck or trunk. Sometimes a band may extend from the leg onto the buttock or abdomen. Usually there are no symptoms but some patients may complain of slight or intense itching.

Occasionally nails may be affected, sometimes without any skin lesions. They become thick, ridged, split and may rarely fall off altogether.

What treatments are available?

There is no effective treatment for lichen striatus and in most cases none is necessary. It usually resolves within 6 months but may leave temporary pale or dark marks (hypopigmentation or hyperpigmentation).

[Emollients](#) may be used to help treat dryness or itching, if present. [Topical steroids](#) or [pimecrolimus cream](#) may clear the lesions although they may take some weeks to be effective.

Related information

References:

- Campanati A, Brandozzi G, Giangiacomi M, Simonetti O, Marconi B, Offidani AM. Lichen striatus in adults and pimecrolimus: open, off-label clinical study. Int J Dermatol. 2008 Jul;47(7):732-6. [Medline](#).

On DermNet NZ:

- [Mosaicism](#)
- [Birthmarks](#)
- [Acquired Blaschkoid dermatitis](#)
- [Superimposed segmental manifestation of polygenic skin disorders](#)

Other websites:

- [Lichen striatus](#) – emedicine dermatology, the online textbook

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DermNet does not provide an on-line consultation service.

If you have any concerns with your skin or its treatment, see a dermatologist for advice.

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