

## RELATIVES

# WHEN YOUR RELATIVE HAS HIDRADENITIS SUPPURATIVA

Someone you love has HS. Whether you are a friend, spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend, live-in partner, parent, son or daughter or someone else, it is important for you to know that the person you love has HS. Because HS is a disease that affects both family and friends. For you as a relative it is important that you know something about HS and its symptoms, so you can provide the care and support your loved one needs.



### What you need to know about HS

HS is a chronic skin disease causing fluid-filled abscesses, odour problems and pain, especially during breakouts. The fact that HS is a chronic skin disease means that it will never go away, but will recur at varying intervals.

HS is not contagious and it is not caused by poor hygiene. In fact, the cause of the disease is unknown, but in some families it is hereditary. In other cases, factors such as obesity, smoking, infections and tight clothing may contribute to or aggravate the disease.

HS affects people differently and has a serious impact on most patients' daily lives. When the disease is active, the pain can be so severe that it may be difficult to perform daily activities. Moreover, the disease is not only a physical challenge. Due to its symptoms, the disease is tabooed, which is why many are living with the disease in secret.

### You can feel powerless

The disease changes the daily lives of all relatives, and there is no exact formula for what you can do as a relative. This can be frustrating, because you may feel powerless when the person you love is in pain or feeling depressed. Moreover, communication may be difficult, because the disease is tabooed and some people find it hard to talk about it.

**"Being honest is the best thing I have done to my family and friends. I have told them how I feel and what they can do to help. As a result of my openness, the disease is not such a big part of my daily life anymore and I can focus on the positive things in life."**

- HS-patient



**HS is often hereditary; 44% have family members with HS**



**HS is a dermatological disease, and it is a dermatologist, who plans the patient's course of treatment**



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# AS A RELATIVE YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

By being understanding and open you can help yourself and your loved one.



### There are some things you can do

Firstly, it is important that you gain an understanding of the disease and how it affects the person you love. When you acquaint yourself with the consequences of the disease, you also get a better understanding of what you can do to help.

Secondly, it is important that you insist on talking frankly about the disease, even though it may be hard. This may be a relief to you all, since it becomes clear to you when you can help and when to give space.

Thirdly, it is important that you have someone you can talk to about your challenges as a relative.

In the Patient Association HS Denmark many of us have experience in how to manage daily life. If you want to talk to us about what you can do when a person you love gets HS, please don't hesitate to contact us via [www.hidrosadenitis.dk](http://www.hidrosadenitis.dk)

**"When my girlfriend was diagnosed with HS it was hard – for her, for me and for our children. She was tired and unhappy and it was a blow to her confidence. And I didn't know what to do. But when we finally took the time to have a long and hard talk, everything got better. I got a better sense of when I should help and when I should give space."**

- Boyfriend of HS-patient



**HS** affects mental health; 36% suffer from depression



**HS** occurs in areas where skin touches skin. The disease is often seen in the armpits and the groin area