

# Richmond Hill Dermatologist Sees Hundreds of Patients with Hidradenitis Suppurativa (HS)

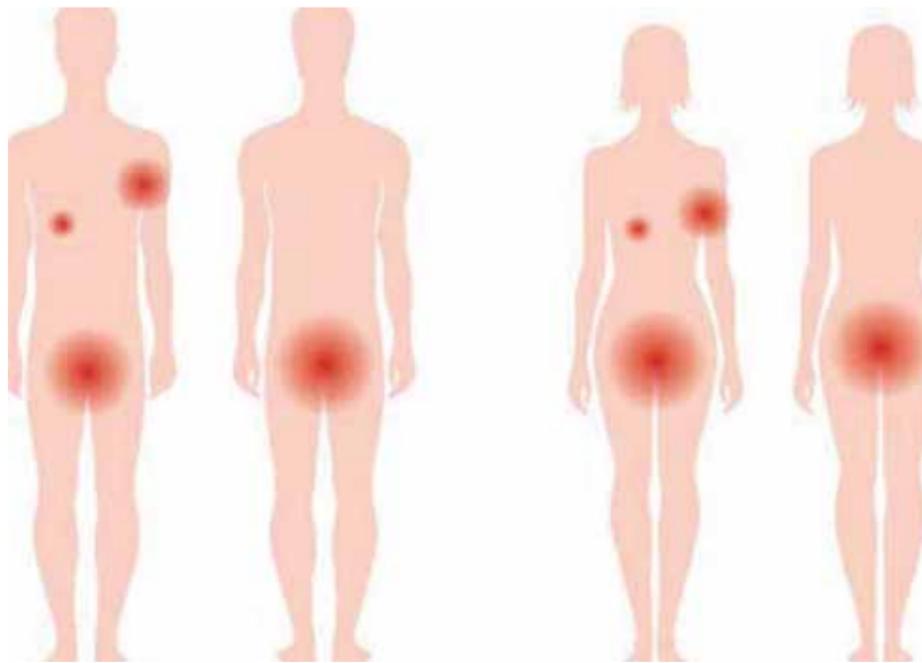
## Specialized care for HS patients coming to Women's College Hospital in June

By: Dr. Afsaneh Alavi

You've probably never heard of Hidradenitis Suppurativa (HS). Unfortunately and fortunately, I'm seeing much more HS at York Dermatology Center. In fact, I'm currently treating over 450 patients with HS.

It's unfortunate because HS is a chronic and often painful, genetic disease, that presents as pimples and boils. Your skin erupts and bleeds. HS typically occurs in folded areas of our body such as under arms and breasts, groin and where skin rubs together. Because HS appears in personal areas and looks like a rash, it can be embarrassing and often misidentified as being a skin irritation or infection. According to a patient report by the Canadian Skin Patient Alliance entitled Scarred for Life, most Canadians with HS wait up to 9 years for a proper diagnosis. This near-decade wait creates confusion, concern and both emotional and physical pain as one must constantly manage and bandage the re-occurring wounds on their skin.

It's fortunate I'm seeing so many patients with HS because there are treatment options available. Clearly, we are seeing a positive progression in disease identification. There is hope. It is important to know that HS is not an infection. HS is not contagious. And HS cannot be transmitted to someone else. If you've had skin pimples or boils re-occur for several months in the folded skin, you might have HS. You



have not done anything wrong, it is a genetic disease.

HS Specialized Care at Women's College Hospital – While HS is not a new disease, there is new research, resources and treatment options now available. With increased understanding of the disease comes greater need. This June, Women's College Hospital will offer specialized care and support for patients living with HS. Research shows that raising awareness and multidisciplinary care improves HS health outcomes.

If you think you have HS, please know you are not alone. There is help. If you're experiencing any symptoms, I encourage you to request a referral to a dermatologist. Their expertise in skin

health will enable them to assess your skin condition symptoms and provide an accurate diagnosis. Approved medications to treat HS are available. If you've been diagnosed with HS, review your treatment plan and goals with your doctor. To learn more about HS, please visit: [www.HSAware.ca](http://www.HSAware.ca), [www.HSFoundation.ca](http://www.HSFoundation.ca), [CanadianSkin.ca](http://CanadianSkin.ca) or join the conversation using #Honest-WithHS.

Common HS impact: the lesions that first appear like pimples may get worse, turn to boils and abscesses.

Dr. Afsaneh Alavi treats patients at the York Dermatology Centre located in Richmond Hill. She completed her Dermatology residency at the University of Toronto and is an Assistant Pro-

fessor in the Faculty of Medicine (Division of Dermatology) at the University of Toronto.



Dr. Afsaneh Alavi

**For Advertising  
in  
Monsoon Journal  
Call:  
416.358.3235**

# GTA Resident Receives the Gift of Sight

Today, there are over 4.25 million Canadians living with a serious eye disease and every year, it is estimated that over 50,000 Canadians will lose their sight.

When Sarah McCann went to her ophthalmologist for her regular eye check-up, she was shocked to learn that she had cataracts in both of her eyes. Cataracts are a clouding of the eye's natural lens, which can lead to vision loss. Most cataract cases occur later in life, but Sarah was surprised to learn that her cataracts appeared earlier than most, at the age of forty.

McCann had worn glasses since grade twelve but admitted she had noticed her vision decline at a more accelerated rate in recent months. She was presented the option of undergoing cataract surgery with a pair of FineVision trifocal lenses. This opportunity was

part of a national campaign – Helping Eyes, Changing Lives - launched by Bausch + Lomb Canada during Vision Health Month in May.

Sarah completed her second eye surgery four weeks after the first, noting a significant difference in her sight already. "Colours are brighter," McCann shared, "everything is more defined."

She has been enjoying waking up in the morning and being able see without putting her glasses on. The surgery allowed her to slip back into her usual routine.

Working as a data technician, McCann said, "Looking at the screen is pretty important for what I do. This surgery has provided me with the opportunity to continue doing the things I use to do and have an improved quality of life."

"The biggest change has been my

ability to drive, I am finally able to drive my daughter to her dance classes again" McCann added.

She also has the ability to pursue her passions, "I can also keep knitting and crafting now that I can see things up close."

The Bausch+Lomb campaign was an initiative in honour of their 165th anniversary and in the spirit of giving back to the community, where cataract surgery was offered to improve the sight of up to 20 Canadians.

McCann's story is a reminder of the importance of regular eye health – something that Canadians can often take for granted. Beyond eye diseases, approximately 500,000 Canadians experience significant vision loss that impacts their day-to-day quality of life. Fortunately, 75 per cent of vision loss occurrences is preventable or treatable.

To learn more about the Helping Eyes, Changing Lives campaign, please visit: <http://helpingeyeschanginglives.com/>



Sarah McCann