



FIGURE 11-3: Psoriasis. (Reprinted from Barankin, B, and Freiman, A: Derm Notes: Clinical Dermatology Pocket Guide. F.A. Davis, Philadelphia, 2006; p 133.)

corticosteroids, low-dose antihistamines, salicylic acid, or phototherapy. Specific antipsoriatic agents include the cream anthralin (Psoriatec) and calcipotriene (Dovonex, Calcitrene), which is available as both a cream and an ointment. Oral or injectable methotrexate is used for severe disease unresponsive to other therapy.

Many countries, including Argentina, France, and Iceland, have spas that claim to have healing hot springs containing varying combinations of algae, thermal mud, mineral- and salt-rich water, and other natural substances that cure both psoriasis and dermatitis. Use of UV light has also shown some promise of improvement in psoriatic symptoms.

■ SKIN CANCER AND MEDICATIONS

Skin cancer can occur when the skin's tissue is damaged. The three major types of skin cancer are basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and malignant melanoma. Basal cell carcinoma is the most common form of skin cancer and rarely **metastasizes** (spreads) (Fig. 11-4). Treatment may require surgical excision, but topical preparations for superficial basal cell carcinomas such as fluorouracil, which affects the rapidly dividing cancer cells, or imiquimod (a topical immunomodulator that stimulates the immune system) may be used. Liquid nitrogen cryotherapy is also an option.

Squamous cell carcinoma arises from malignant keratinocytes (the most common type of skin cells that produce keratin) (Fig. 11-5). This form of skin cancer can metastasize. Surgical removal is the treatment of choice, and radiation therapy may be needed. The third type of skin cancer is malignant melanoma, and its incidence is quickly rising (Fig. 11-6). This unpredictable cancer spreads through the lymphatic system and blood.



FIGURE 11-4: Basal cell carcinoma. (Reprinted from Barankin, B, and Freiman, A: Derm Notes: Clinical Dermatology Pocket Guide. F.A. Davis, Philadelphia, 2006; p 70.)