

Explore your
treatment
options

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Defuse
stress—and
inflammation!

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Health Monitor[®]

Living



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“We’re
going
after our
dreams!”

Plaque Psoriasis

Cailyn and Caelyn Abbott struggled with itchy skin and self-doubt—until a biologic calmed their symptoms and restored their can-do spirit.

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VON24

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LET YOUR CONFIDENCE SHINE!

The latest plaque psoriasis treatments can mean improvement of symptoms and a new sense of freedom.

Stress, temperature, diet—people with plaque psoriasis know that these are only a few of the triggers that can bring on or worsen a psoriasis flare. Combined with the itching and flaking skin, sleeplessness, anxiety, and embarrassment commonly experienced by those with the condition, the learning curve on managing your psoriasis can be steep. But whether newly diagnosed or living long-term with psoriasis, know that identifying and addressing your symptoms and staying aware of the newest treatments are the best steps you can take for flare-free skin, along with practicing self-care for the psychological and emotional challenges that can accompany psoriasis.

Just ask Cailyn and Caelyn Abbott, fraternal twins featured on p. 10 of this guide who have become experts at managing their psoriasis symptoms, and have found biologic treatments that are allowing them to thrive with plaque-free skin.

Or read about Jo Feathers and Allison Lewis on p. 16, who share their strategies and lessons learned over



many years of managing their psoriasis. From mindfulness, movement and a healthy diet to sharing your struggles with and getting support from friends and family, Jo and Allison offer a wealth of insights to improve your psoriasis symptoms and help you live your best life.

Get the upper hand

Like Cailyn, Caelyn, Jo and Allison, you've likely experienced distress over your plaque psoriasis. But as one of the eight million Americans living with it, you are far from alone. Luckily, there's much you can do.

Take a moment to read through this guide; arming yourself with knowledge can let you and your care team zero in on a treatment plan that's right for you.

A closer look

Plaque psoriasis is the most common form of psoriasis. It happens when your immune system goes into overdrive and attacks healthy skin cells, causing

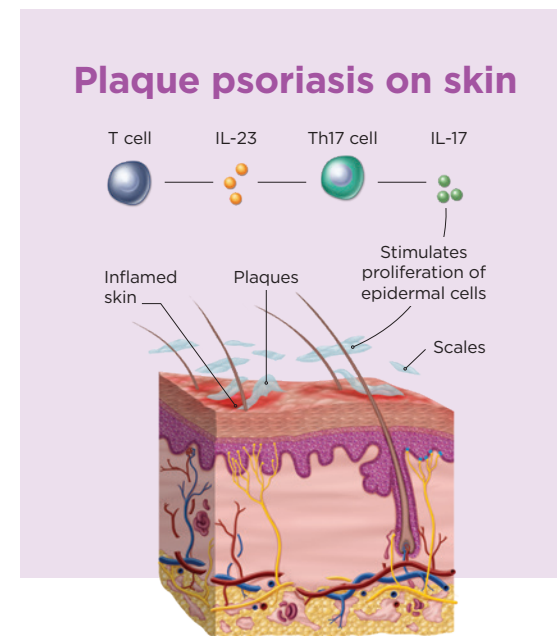
skin to become inflamed and produce new skin cells at an accelerated rate. Normally, the body takes about a month to produce new skin cells, but in psoriasis, the process can take just three to four days. The result is a buildup of itchy, flaky skin called plaques.

Who gets it?

According to the American Academy of Derma-

tology, about 80% to 90% of people living with psoriasis have the plaque form. Researchers believe some people are born with a genetic predisposition to the condition and develop psoriasis after exposure to a certain trigger—this can be anything from an infection like strep to a stressful event, such as a job loss, divorce or move.

Continued on next page ►



Psoriasis often develops between the ages of 15 and 35, though it can come on at any age.

How is it diagnosed?

Your healthcare provider (HCP) will examine your skin and nails. Occasionally, they may order a biopsy. Your dermatologist will determine the type and severity of your psoriasis, ranking it mild, moderate or severe.

One way to assess that is by looking at how much of your body is covered:

- **Less than 3%** = mild
- **From 3% to 10%** = moderate
- **More than 10%** = severe

Your HCP may also use the Psoriasis Area and Severity Index (PASI) to measure the severity and extent of your psoriasis on a scale from 0 to 72, where a score

higher than 10 suggests severe psoriasis.

How is it treated?

Your plan of attack may include any of the following methods:

1. Applying topical treatments. These medications, available as creams and ointments, help reduce inflammation, itching and scaling. Examples include tapinarof,

roflumilast, calcipotriene, coal tar, corticosteroids, retinoids and salicylic acid.

2. Exposing your skin to light.

Your dermatologist may suggest phototherapy—the use of ultraviolet light to treat your skin. This therapy helps to clear up plaques and reduce inflammation. Phototherapy involves exposing your skin to a specialized lamp in your doctor’s office or to a prescription home phototherapy unit. Light treatments typically happen a few times a week for three months or longer. Examples include ultraviolet B (UVB), psoralen + ultraviolet A (PUVA) and excimer laser. *Note:* Tanning beds should not be used as a substitute for phototherapy.

3. Exploring body-wide (systemic) medication options.

These medications slow skin cell growth and reduce inflammation. Examples include cyclosporine, methotrexate and biologic drugs that block messengers such as tumor necrosis factor- α , interleukin-17A and interleukin-23. Biologic therapies and other treatments impacting the immune system are some of the breakthrough therapies for plaque psoriasis. ●



Meet your psoriasis care team

These are the healthcare professionals who can help you manage your plaque psoriasis:

Primary care physician (PCP):

This MD checks your overall health and likely diagnosed your psoriasis. They may refer you to a dermatologist or other specialist for treatment.

Dermatologist:

This physician specializes in treating conditions affecting the skin, hair and nails.

Dermatology nurse:

This nurse has received additional training in dermatology and may work with your doctor on your care.

Physician associate (PA)/ Nurse practitioner (NP):

These healthcare professionals can help manage your psoriasis and prescribe medications.

Psychiatrist/psychologist/social worker:

Professionals who can help you deal with psychological and social issues related to your psoriasis.

Dietitian/nutritionist:

A nutrition expert who can help you identify foods that may trigger or help combat inflammation.

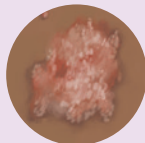
How plaque psoriasis appears on different skin tones

You might know about the plaques and scales that come with psoriasis, but did you know that they develop in different colors depending on a person’s skin tone? Here’s how they look on...



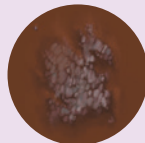
LIGHT SKIN

Plaques can appear as raised red patches with silvery scales.



MEDIUM SKIN

Plaques can appear as raised salmon-colored patches with silvery white scales.



DARK SKIN

Plaques can appear as raised purple or dark brown patches with gray scales.

Another feature unique to darker skin tones?

Dark patches of skin that remain even after the psoriasis clears. “Patients with dark skin often heal with what is called ‘post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation,’ ” says Mark Lebwohl, MD, who adds that you can discuss treatment options for hyperpigmentation with your care provider.

CONSIDERING BIOLOGICS?

Here's what you should know

Frustrated by stubborn plaques? It might be time to discuss more aggressive treatment. Unlike other medications, biologics help clear your skin by zeroing in on the immune system malfunction behind your flares. To learn more, read on.

1. WHAT ARE BIOLOGICS?

A biologic response modifier, or biologic, is a protein-based drug made from living cells cultured in a laboratory. Biologics inactivate the specific inflammatory molecules causing your skin lesions. Some biologics are more targeted than others, and whether you may benefit from a more targeted or less targeted medication varies from patient to patient.

2. HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M A CANDIDATE?

Take a moment to think about your current regimen and how well it's working for you. For example, is your skin clear or do you have significant patches? Or maybe you have just a few plaques—but they're enough to make you feel self-conscious and cause you to say no to activities you enjoy. And do you have other conditions like obesity or a history of cancer that may impact the selection of a biologic therapy? Discussing concerns like these with your doctor can help you determine whether biologics may be the next step for you.

Note: People who have compromised immune systems or those with infections, such as tuberculosis or fungal infections, may not be able to take a biologic or may require pretreatment of their underlying condition.

3. HOW ARE BIOLOGICS ADMINISTERED?

Biologics are either injected under the skin or given intravenously by infusion.



Just ask!

Today, there are more biologics available than ever before. Explore the pros and cons of each with your physician, and ask which option might be best for you.

When cost is an issue

Biologics are usually covered by health insurance. Some biologics are given in your doctor's office by one of your healthcare team members, and may be covered by Medicare Part B. If you need help, ask the staff at your doctor's office.

Good to note!

If you are squeamish about injections, tell your doctor. There are some treatments that can be administered in the office by a member of your healthcare team, which might be more comfortable for you than versions that need to be self-injected.

4. WHAT ABOUT SIDE EFFECTS?

Luckily, they tend to be mild no matter which biologic you use, but some breakthrough biologics block less of the immune system and so far appear to have even fewer side effects. The most common are pain and rash at the injection site, which occurs in fewer than 30% of patients. During an infusion, you'll also be monitored for signs of an allergic reaction—e.g., fever, chills, nausea and drop in blood pressure. “Biologics have been on the market a long time and have a good safety record,” says Francisco Tausk, MD, professor of dermatology at the University of Rochester School of Medicine.

5. HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO SEE RESULTS?

“It varies among biologics,” says Dr. Tausk. “Some are faster than others. However, results are usually seen between four and six weeks.” Of course, some people may find it can take several months to get the full benefits. In clinical trials, 50% to 95% of those beginning biologics experienced 75% improvement in psoriasis symptoms within four months. ●

“We’re going after our dreams—*despite psoriasis!*”



Photos by Tamara Leigh Photography

Hard-to-hide plaques and itchy skin were dampening twins Cailyn and Caelyn’s confidence. Thankfully, a biologic calmed their psoriasis and restored their self-esteem. Watch them take on the world.

—BY JOANA MANGUNE

At first look, twins Cailyn and Caelyn Abbott can be challenging to tell apart with their similar haircuts and smiles. But those closest to them know that Cailyn’s style is “chic with a little bit of edginess” while Caelyn enjoys a “girly and glitzy” look. Says Cailyn, “I like to show a little skin, but I always keep it classy. I love a good neutral color palette, so you’ll see me in cream, brown and muted green.” As for Caelyn? “I’m the opposite. I don’t like to show my skin. I lean more toward a “sophisticated sexy” style that features pink, glitter and rhinestones.”

While their fashion tastes differ, there’s no doubt that the 30-year-old sisters share a special bond. “We’re each other’s best friends,” says Cailyn. “We grew up doing everything together.” And when they say everything— they mean everything, in-

cluding dealing with their plaque psoriasis diagnosis together.

“We were diagnosed at different times”

Despite sharing identical genes, Cailyn and Caelyn’s psoriasis did not present at the same time. “In 5th grade, I started noticing patches behind my ears and scalp,” Caelyn recalls. “Then it slowly spread around my arms.” Concerned, their parents sought opinions from different medical experts. “The dermatologist examined my skin and she knew right away it was psoriasis.” Caelyn’s doctor prescribed a topical steroid cream.

Cailyn wasn’t diagnosed until she was in high school. “Caelyn’s dermatologist had warned me, ‘You’re probably going to get psoriasis later.’ But the beauty of having a twin is that we have each oth-

er. Seeing Caelyn go through her diagnosis made me feel like I could do it, too.”

“It’s something we couldn’t hide”

In high school, Cailyn and Caelyn navigated through their psoriasis journey together and managed the plaques by applying steroid creams and using different moisturizing oils and ointments. “We were so young and it’s something we couldn’t hide,” says Cailyn. “We just wanted to fit in with everybody. I felt so ashamed whenever I had active psoriasis spots.” Caelyn agrees. “High school was the hardest for me. I had a ring of psoriasis patches around my forehead, so I hid behind my bangs. Then the patches went all the way down to my legs. We felt so self-conscious wearing our cheer-leading skirts.”

“Topical creams didn’t work anymore”

In college, they realized that the steroid creams had

Continued on p. 15 ►

FIND A TREATMENT THAT'S IN IT FOR

THE Long Haul^{*} with ILUMYA[®]



^{*}Based on 5-year data.



FOR ADULTS WITH
MODERATE-TO-SEVERE PLAQUE PSORIASIS

STARTS
WORKING AFTER

2

DOSES

STILL GOING
STRONG

5

YEARS
INTO TREATMENT

MEDICARE PART B
PATIENTS MAY PAY

\$0[†]

[†]Eligibility limits and
exclusions apply.

Talk to your doctor to see if this treatment is right for you.



What is ILUMYA?

ILUMYA[®] (tildrakizumab-asmn) is a prescription medicine used to treat adults with moderate to severe plaque psoriasis who may benefit from taking injections, pills (systemic therapy), or phototherapy (treatment using ultraviolet or UV light).

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

What is the most important information I should know about ILUMYA?

Do not use ILUMYA if you have had a severe allergic reaction to ILUMYA or any of its ingredients.

Get emergency medical help right away if you get any of the following symptoms of a serious allergic reaction:

- feel faint • trouble breathing or throat tightness
- swelling of your face, eyelids, lips, mouth, tongue or throat
- chest tightness • skin rash

ILUMYA is a medicine that may lower the ability of your immune system to fight infections and may increase your risk of infections. Your healthcare provider should check you for infections and tuberculosis (TB) before starting treatment with ILUMYA and

may treat you for TB before you begin treatment with ILUMYA if you have a history of TB or have active TB. Your healthcare provider should watch you closely for signs and symptoms of TB during and after treatment with ILUMYA.

Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have an infection or have symptoms of an infection, including:

- fever, sweats, or chills • muscle aches • weight loss • cough
- warm, red, or painful skin or sores on your body different from your psoriasis • diarrhea or stomach pain • shortness of breath
- burning when you urinate or urinating more often than normal
- blood in your phlegm (mucus)

Before receiving ILUMYA, tell your healthcare provider about all of your medical conditions, including if you:

- have any of the conditions or symptoms listed in the section **“What is the most important information I should know about ILUMYA?”**
- have an infection that does not go away or that keeps coming back
- have TB or have been in close contact with someone with TB

- recently received or are scheduled to receive a vaccine (immunization). You should avoid receiving live vaccines during treatment with ILUMYA.
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if ILUMYA can harm your unborn baby.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if ILUMYA passes into your breast milk.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

It is not known if ILUMYA is safe and effective in children under 18 years of age.

What are the possible side effects of ILUMYA?

ILUMYA may cause serious side effects. See “What is the most important information I should know about ILUMYA?”

The most common side effects of ILUMYA include: upper respiratory infections, injection site reactions and diarrhea. These are not all of the possible side effects of ILUMYA. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You are encouraged to report any negative side effects of ILUMYA to FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

You are also encouraged to report side effects or ADEs (adverse drug events) to our Drug Safety Department at 1-800-406-7984 or drug.safetyUSA@sunpharma.com (preferred) with as much information as available.

Please read Brief Summary of the full Prescribing Information for ILUMYA on the next page and discuss any questions with your doctor.



Scan QR code or visit ILUMYA.com/affordability to discover the support we offer.



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ILUMYA[®]
tildrakizumab-asmn
Injection 100 mg/mL

Consumer Brief Summary

The risk information provided here is not comprehensive. This information does not take the place of talking to your doctor about your medical condition or treatment. To learn more, talk about ILUMYA® (tildrakizumab-asmn) with your health care provider or pharmacist. For more information and to obtain the FDA-approved product labeling, call 888-726-2299 or visit www.ilumya.com.

What is the most important information I should know about ILUMYA?

ILUMYA may cause serious side effects, including: Serious allergic reactions. Get emergency medical help right away if you get any of the following symptoms of a serious allergic reaction:

- feel faint
- trouble breathing or throat tightness
- swelling of your face, eyelids, lips, mouth, tongue or throat
- chest tightness
- skin rash

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- muscle aches
- weight loss
- cough
- warm, red, or painful skin or sores on your body different from your psoriasis
- diarrhea or stomach pain
- shortness of breath
- burning when you urinate or urinating more often than normal
- blood in your phlegm (mucus)

See “What are the possible side effects of ILUMYA?” for more information about side effects

What is ILUMYA?

ILUMYA is a prescription medicine used to treat adults with moderate to severe plaque psoriasis who may benefit from taking injections, pills (systemic therapy) or treatment using ultraviolet or UV light (phototherapy). It is not known if ILUMYA is safe and effective in children under 18 years of age.

Do not use ILUMYA if you have had a severe allergic reaction to tildrakizumab or any of the other ingredients in ILUMYA. See the end of this Medication Guide for a complete list of ingredients in ILUMYA.

Before receiving ILUMYA, tell your healthcare provider about all of your medical conditions, including if you:

- have any of the conditions or symptoms listed in the section “What is the most important information I should know about ILUMYA?”
- have an infection that does not go away or that keeps coming back
- have TB or have been in close contact with someone with TB
- recently received or are scheduled to receive a vaccine (immunization). You should avoid receiving live vaccines during treatment with ILUMYA.
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if ILUMYA can harm your unborn baby.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if ILUMYA passes into your breast milk.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

How will I receive ILUMYA?

- ILUMYA should only be given to you by a healthcare provider.
- ILUMYA is given as an injection under your skin (subcutaneous injection) in areas of your body such as your thighs, stomach area (abdomen), or upper arm.
- If you miss a follow-up appointment and do not receive your dose of ILUMYA, schedule another appointment as soon as possible.

What are the possible side effects of ILUMYA?

ILUMYA may cause serious side effects. See “What is the most important information I should know about ILUMYA?”

The most common side effects of ILUMYA include:

- upper respiratory infections
- injection site reactions
- diarrhea

These are not all of the possible side effects of ILUMYA. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

General information about the safe and effective use of ILUMYA.

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Medication Guide. You can ask your healthcare provider for information about ILUMYA that is written for health professionals.

What are the ingredients in ILUMYA?

Active ingredient: tildrakizumab-asmn

Inactive ingredients: L-histidine, L-histidine hydrochloride monohydrate, polysorbate 80, sucrose, and Water for Injection, USP.

Manufactured by: Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Limited

Mumbai, Maharashtra India 400 063

U.S. License No. 2092

U.S. Patent No. 8,404,813, 8,293,883 and 9,809,648

Tildrakizumab-asmn (active ingred.) Product of South Korea.

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stopped working for them. Their dermatologist mentioned oral medications and biologic injections as possible options, but Cailyn and Caelyn had to exhaust different methods first, trying topical creams, fish oil supplements and bath treatments. “We had psoriasis patches everywhere—behind our ears, our arms, legs and back. We didn’t know how to stop it,” says Cailyn of treatment after treatment that failed.

At that point, Cailyn and

Caelyn were eager to try something else. Cailyn’s dermatologist recommended light therapy. “But it was too expensive,” she says. Cailyn was prescribed an oral medication. “I saw my skin improve, but it made me feel so nauseated and I lost a lot of weight.”

Ultimately, Cailyn and Caelyn decided to try biologic injections—and each got a different prescription. “The loading doses and needle sizes were different,” says Caelyn. “I started

the injections in 2021 and it helped clear my skin. But when Cailyn started a new biologic injection in 2022, I noticed that her needle was much smaller with a newer technology. Plus her skin looked clearer, so I asked my dermatologist if I could switch.” Cailyn adds, “Unlike my experience with the oral medication, I didn’t feel any side effects with the biologic treatment. Within two months, I saw my skin consistently clearing.” ●

**“FIND WHAT WORKS FOR YOU!”**

Cailyn and Caelyn are proof that managing psoriasis isn’t “one size fits all.” Here, they share the strategies that are helping both their skin and their mindsets.

Be open to new treatments. “Try things you normally wouldn’t. I was hesitant to try an oral medication at first because I didn’t think a pill could help. While it didn’t work for me in the end, I’m glad I tried it because then I consulted with my doctor and it led us to the biologic treatment that ultimately *would* clear my skin,” says Cailyn.

Do it at your own pace. “As a woman of color, I get hyperpigmentation...my skin is left with dark spots even after my plaques have cleared. Sometimes I still don’t feel comfortable wearing bathing suits or shorts,” shares an emotional Caelyn. “Cailyn has been very supportive and has

told me, ‘Don’t feel like you’re weak. You deal with it differently.’ And she’s right. Maybe I’ll wear the shorts or tank top next week—when I’m ready.”

The right clothing makes all the difference. Opt for light and airy fabrics. “Clothing is so important in our daily lives since it touches our skin. I try to wear cotton or linen ‘cause they’re very airy and give my psoriasis room to breathe. I live in California, so I enjoy a good, flowy dress that I can dress up or down,” says Cailyn, who is working on starting her own fashion line that keeps psoriasis comfort in mind. ●

“We’re showing our skin some grace”

From resisting the urge to scratch itchy skin to practicing mindfulness, Jo and Allison share the lessons they’ve learned over the years. Ask your healthcare team if they can work for you, too! —BY JOANA MANGUNE

“Take care of your mind *and* body”

JO FEATHERS
AUSTIN, TX

Stay in the present.

“For lasting relief, I lean on my three pillars: mindfulness, a commitment to daily movement and healthy eating,” shares Jo who was covered from head to toe (almost 90%) in plaque psoriasis back in 2014. “Starting with mindfulness, this involves a deep dive into the state of my nervous system—assessing not only what I consume physically and mentally but also my movement habits, stress levels and daily routines. Mindfulness anchors my

approach, reinforcing the importance of being fully present and aware in every aspect of my life. This practice is essential as it intertwines with the other two pillars. It informs my commitment to daily movement, ensuring I stay active to support both my mental and physical health. Similarly, mindfulness guides my dietary choices, encouraging me to focus on whole, nutrient-dense foods and limit processed items. Together, these practices form a holistic approach

to managing my psoriasis, each element supporting and enhancing the others.”

Use ice packs to prevent the itch-scratch cycle.

“When I feel the intense itch or burn of a flare-up, I first reach for ice packs to calm the immediate discomfort. Applying ice not only reduces the itch, but also provides a numbing sensation that helps me ignore the urge to scratch. And that’s crucial because once I scratch one spot,

it’s like they all wake up demanding attention. So, ice packs help me keep that domino effect in check!”

Find the silver lining.

“Having psoriasis has brought some unexpected upsides into my life. It ignited my passion for holistic health and wellness, which propelled me into a career where I can help others. My journey inspired me to become an advocate and coach for natural healing. It’s been a key factor in

my transition from survivor to a thriver, turning what could have been a limiting factor in my life into a source of strength and motivation.”

Be gentle on yourself.

“I focus on managing stress through breathwork, meditation and other methods that regulate my nervous system. Regular therapy sessions also help me navigate current challenges and address deep-seated trauma.” ▶



Photo by Laning Photography



“Make sure you feel seen and supported”

ALLISON LEWIS
OWENSBORO, KY

Talk about your psoriasis.

“I find myself being self-conscious of my psoriasis when it flares up. During those times, you can often find me wearing hats to cover my scalp when in public. I’m grateful my psoriasis isn’t as severe as it could be, but it is still something that affects my confidence,” admits Allison who first noticed

flakes in her scalp in January 2020. A few months later she was diagnosed with plaque psoriasis after the patches started spreading on her legs, arms and stomach. What helps boost her self-esteem? Being open about her psoriasis. “If I’m experiencing a flare-up and need to be in public, I usually address it upfront by explaining that it’s psoriasis

and not dandruff. Most of the time, people respond by sharing that they’ve either dealt with it themselves or know someone who has.”

Don’t go it alone.

“My mom and grandmother have been there for me during my psoriasis journey. They both check in with me frequently and have even helped me ap-

Photo by Jake Dylan

“To help keep my psoriasis from flaring up, I make sure to spend at least 10 minutes a day outdoors.”

ply medicine to my scalp to really make sure I’m hitting areas that are hard for me to see.”

Create a skin-soothing bath routine.

“Whenever I find myself wanting to scratch the psoriasis patches, I usually try to take a bath or shower to relieve some of the itchiness. I recommend using Epsom salts or a psoriasis body wash—these products help me feel more comfortable. Also, whenever I wash my hair, I use the cool setting on my hair dryer to dry my hair and scalp.”

Schedule time for some sun.

“My psoriasis is much more manageable during the

warmer months. To help keep my psoriasis from flaring up, I make sure to spend at least 10 minutes a day outdoors. I do this by spending time outside with my dogs, going on walks or reading my book.” ●

Health **m Monitor**

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ITCHY SKIN AT NIGHT I can't get a good night's sleep because I keep waking up to scratch my skin. I feel so tired and lack energy in the mornings. What can I do to help with this itching?

Q
A

Answers to your questions on managing plaque psoriasis

A: Treating psoriasis effectively is key—reducing inflammation will significantly lessen the itching. In the meantime, consider using over-the-counter moisturizers/creams with menthol to soothe your skin. Apply these products after a brief lukewarm shower, while skin is damp, as this helps to better lock in moisture. During the winter, run a humidifier while you sleep if your house is prone to low moisture levels.

Are biologics right for me?

Q: *I'm 34 and have been using steroid creams and pills for years. Recently my skin has worsened—plaques are now covering my forearms and knees. I'm considering trying a biologic injection. What do I need to know?*

A: There are more than 10 approved biologics for psoriasis, and the right choice depends on several factors, including if you have any history of certain cancers, MS, inflammatory bowel disease, heart disease, obesity and so on. Your past reactions to treatments, insurance coverage and how you prefer to receive the medication will all guide this decision. Consult a dermatologist to discuss the best option for you. ●

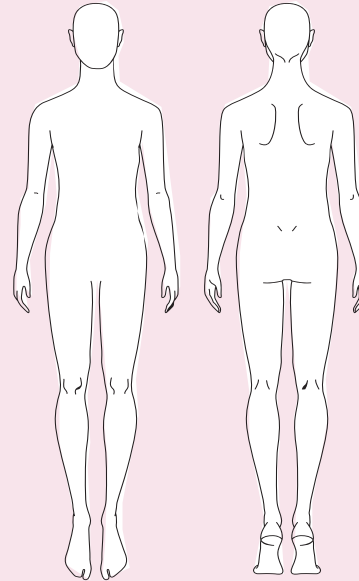
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Assess your psoriasis

Identify your triggers and mark your flare-up spots using this tool. Share your answers with your care team. This will help them create a treatment plan just for you!

1. Which areas of your body are affected?

Please indicate by marking the areas of your body where you have a psoriasis patch.



2. How bothered are you by symptoms?

Please rate how the following symptoms affect you on a scale from 1 (not very much) to 5 (always/almost always):

- I can't sleep well. 1 2 3 4 5
- I have areas of red skin. 1 2 3 4 5
- I have areas of dry skin. 1 2 3 4 5
- My skin is itchy. 1 2 3 4 5
- My skin bleeds. 1 2 3 4 5

3. Have you noticed any triggers?

Please write down any factors that seem to trigger a flare:

Activities: _____

Irritants: _____

Environments/Temperatures: _____

Diet: _____

Infections and other illnesses: _____

Hormonal changes: _____

Emotions: _____

4. Check the statement that best reflects how you feel as a result of your psoriasis:

- I feel sad and hopeless.
 - Never
 - Rarely
 - Always
 - Sometimes
 - Often
- I feel nervous, edgy or anxious.
 - Never
 - Rarely
 - Always
 - Sometimes
 - Often
- I feel like everyone is staring at me.
 - Never
 - Rarely
 - Always
 - Sometimes
 - Often
- I say no to activities because I never know if I'll have visible plaques.
 - Never
 - Rarely
 - Always
 - Sometimes
 - Often

Stop stressing and clear your skin—with meditation!

Is stress turning your skin into its own reality TV show, full of drama and unpredictability? If you're managing plaque psoriasis, that's not unusual: A survey by the *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology* found that 30% of psoriasis patients identified stress as a major factor in the frequency and severity of their flares. While it's impossible to eliminate stress from your life, there are ways to increase your resilience and offset its effects—and meditation is one of the best.

In fact, anthropologists have discovered that humans have been practicing forms of meditation for thousands of years—and reaping the benefits: slower brain waves; a rise

in the “happiness hormones,” dopamine and serotonin; and a spike in GABA, a neurotransmitter that induces calm, according to research at Stanford University's Brain Performance Center. Those physiological changes can lower inflammation throughout the body, potentially halting or easing a psoriasis flare.

“We often recommend three different types of meditation to our patients struggling with psoriasis: guided imagery, progressive muscle relaxation and mindfulness,” explains Mina Guirguis, PsyD, licensed clinical psychologist/psychodermatologist and founder of the Emotional Wellness Center for Skin Disorders in La Mirada,

CA. “Each has its own particular benefits, and all are great for lowering levels of stress and anxiety.” Ready to get started? Give these methods a try, and aim for at least two sessions a week:

1. Guided imagery. This technique involves visualizing calm and positive images to promote peace and well-being. It is typically led by an instructor or recorded guide, making it a great choice for beginners.

How to do it: Find pre-recorded guided imagery sessions on apps like Headspace, Calm and Smiling Mind, or check out YouTube for tons of free options. Time on each session: About 10-30 minutes.

2. Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR).

This technique involves systematically tensing and then relaxing different

muscle groups in the body. It's helpful if you carry a lot of physical tension in your muscles when stressed—such as clenching the jaw or tightening the shoulders.

How to do it: Sit or lie down in a quiet place. Take a few deep breaths. Begin at your feet by curling your toes slightly for about 5 seconds. Release your toes and let your feet relax for 5 seconds. Next, tighten the muscles in your lower legs;

hold for 5 seconds then relax. Continue this process moving slowly up your body until you reach your jaw. Time on each session: 10-20 minutes.

3. Mindfulness. This practice encourages you to become hyper-focused on your own thoughts in the present moment. It's especially helpful for people with high levels of anxiety and intrusive thoughts, because it focuses

on accepting thoughts that come into the mind without judgment or becoming upset by them.

How to do it: Sit in a quiet, comfortable space. Take slow, deep breaths, focusing only on the sensation of exhaling and inhaling. When thoughts arise, observe them softly without trying to suppress them, then let them go. Time on each session: 5-10 minutes, working up to 30+ minutes. ●



Help your body recover—with restful sleep!

A study in the journal *Sleep* found that just one bad night's rest can heighten the impacts of stress and raise cortisol levels. Sleep and psoriasis are synergistic—a bad night's sleep can worsen flares, and worsened flares can then make it tougher to get a good night's sleep. Here, some top tips from the National Sleep Foundation to help make sure you're getting your 40 winks each night.

cause skin irritation, trap heat and interrupt your sleep due to itching. Instead, look for cotton, silk or bamboo sheets—the higher the thread count, the better.

1. Avoid excessive screen time. Our cellphones and computer screens emit blue light, which can interfere with melatonin production, the hormone that regulates sleep. Instead of doom-scrolling,

try picking up a book before bed to relax your mind.

2. Find the right bedding. Avoid synthetic fibers such as polyester and microfiber, which can

3. Keep your bedroom cool, dark and quiet. Turn your thermostat down before turning in, and consider investing in blackout curtains and earplugs or a white noise machine if needed.



Health Monitor Living



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Questions to ask your doctor today

How would you classify my plaque psoriasis? Is it mild, moderate or severe?



Does it seem like my current treatment is controlling my psoriasis?



What can I do to find relief during a flare?



I'm uncomfortable giving myself injections. Can my dermatologist administer them?



How can I figure out what's causing my flares?



If not, can you suggest a treatment that requires few injections, has the least number of side effects and won't affect any other health problems I may have?



On treatment and need help covering the cost?

Ask your healthcare provider about patient assistance programs or call the manufacturer of the treatment you have been prescribed. Many pharmaceutical companies offer copay assistance programs that can make treatment more affordable.