

Explore
your treatment
options

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“My skin is
in a good
place—and
I’m out of
hiding!”

Plaque Psoriasis

For years, Stevi Fore struggled with plaque psoriasis. But with the support of her medical team, she found the answer that would relieve the itch and clear the red, scaly patches.

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Cover photo by Brittany Breen Photo

THE BASICS 

Clearer skin is in *your* future!

Today you have more ways to fight back against psoriasis than ever before



Symptoms of plaque psoriasis—including dryness, itching and flaking skin—can make you want to hide from the world.

But there is hope.

Just ask Stevi Fore, whose journey with psoriasis began about a decade ago when she noticed

redness and flaking on her scalp, and then plaques in the inner creases of both arms. She grew ashamed to show her uncovered head, arms or legs in public.

Stevi struggled with controlling her symptoms. “No matter how much I shampooed my hair or cleansed my skin, it would just return and be drier, and sometimes it would present a little angrier than usual—really red and irritated and itchy.” ▶





Then, dermatologist and psoriasis specialist Jerry Bagel, MD, at Schweiger Dermatology Group in East Windsor, NJ diagnosed Stevi with plaque psoriasis. She started on topical medications, which were not effective, and eventually received steroid injections that also didn't help. It wasn't until Stevi finally agreed to try a biologic that her psoriasis symptoms

began to subside, and then, eventually, to resolve completely.

Today, she's no longer hiding her skin. "Everything is resolved. I'm totally amazed," Stevi says.

Tracy and Whitney's stories, starting on p. 14, may inspire you as well. They refuse to let psoriasis win, and their tips and suggestions can help you soothe your skin—and your spirit!

The future is bright!

Hoping to find relief from the discomfort of plaque psoriasis like Stevi, Tracy and Whitney? With so many options available today, you have every reason to believe that you, too, can find a treatment that will work for you.

Keep reading this guide for the information and inspiration that can help you on your path to clearer skin. Dive in

right now with a refresher on the disease and how it can affect your entire body.

What is plaque psoriasis?

Psoriasis is known as an immune-mediated disease—meaning it's caused when something goes wrong with a person's immune system. In the case of plaque psoriasis, T-cells, which usually attack germs and foreign invaders, become overactive. They trigger the body to start creating new skin cells at a rapid rate, resulting in itchy and/or painful raised round spots with silvery or white scales that can sometimes crack and bleed.

Plaques can appear anywhere on the body, but most often show up on the scalp, el-

bows, knees or torso. Psoriasis can also affect more than just the skin, and is associated with many other conditions, including heart disease, obesity, diabetes, inflammatory bowel disease and depression. That's why it's key to find a treatment that works!

It's also important to note that psoriasis is not contagious—you cannot catch it or spread it.

Who is at risk?

While scientists are still not sure what causes the immune malfunction behind psoriasis, it's believed to be a combination of genetic and environmental factors. If one parent has it, you have approximately a 10% chance of developing it yourself, and approximately a 50%

chance if both parents have it.

Some people find their psoriasis first appears after a stressful event, such as a move; after having an infection, such as strep; after a bad sunburn or skin injury; after taking a certain medication, such as lithium or a beta blocker; or after coming off oral or injected steroids like prednisone.

Plaque psoriasis strikes people of all genders equally, and while it most often shows up in people between their teen years and mid-30s, it can occur at any age. Smoking also may increase a person's chances of getting it.

How is it diagnosed?

Your healthcare provider may ask you questions about your

PSORIASIS QUICK FACTS

125 MILLION
THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WORLDWIDE IMPACTED BY THE DISEASE

8+ MILLION

THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE AFFECTED IN THE U.S.

Source: psoriasis.org

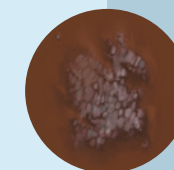


HOW PLAQUE PSORIASIS APPEARS ON DIFFERENT SKIN TONES

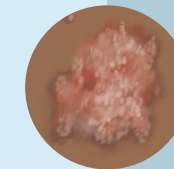
You might know about the plaques and scales that come with psoriasis, but did you know that they develop in different colors depending on a person's skin tone?

Another feature unique to darker skin?

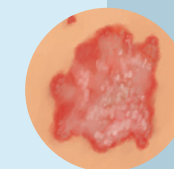
Discoloration that remains even after psoriasis clears. "This is called 'post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation,'" says Mark Lebwohl, MD. "It usually goes away on its own eventually, but if it's bothersome, let your doctor know, as there are treatments available."



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



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



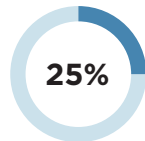
LIGHT SKIN: Plaques can appear as raised red patches with silvery scales.



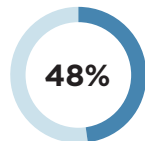
PSORIASIS QUICK FACTS



90% THE PERCENTAGE OF PATIENTS WITH PSORIASIS WHO HAVE THE PLAQUE FORM



25% THE PERCENTAGE OF PATIENTS WITH PSORIASIS WHOSE CASES ARE CONSIDERED MODERATE TO SEVERE



48% THE PERCENTAGE OF PATIENTS WITH PSORIASIS WHO SAY IT HAS A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THEIR LIFE

Sources: aad.org; psoriasis.org

medical and family history and will perform an examination of your skin. In some cases, they may take a small skin biopsy to confirm the diagnosis or rule out other conditions.

Once plaque psoriasis is confirmed, your doctor will rank the severity by determining how much of your body is covered (less than 3% = mild; from 3% to 10% = moderate; more than 10% = severe). Another tool that doctors use is the Psoriasis Area and Severity Index (PASI). This measures the severity of psoriasis on a scale from 0 to 72, where a score higher than 10 would indicate a need for systemic treatments. More limited disease on areas like the palms, soles, face or scalp can also justify systemic therapies.

How is it treated?

While there's still no cure for psoriasis, your healthcare team has an array of options that can help treat the symptoms and even send the condition into remission. Your physician will consider how severe your plaque psoriasis is, how much it affects your day-to-day life and how you've responded to other treatments when considering the options below:

- Topicals: These medications, available as creams, ointments, foams, sprays, solutions—even shampoo—help reduce inflammation, itching and scaling. Examples include calcipotriene, coal tar, corticosteroids, retinoids, PDE-4 inhibitor cream, sali-

cyclic acid, aryl hydrocarbon receptor agonists and more.

- Light-based treatments: Your healthcare provider may suggest phototherapy—the use of ultraviolet (UV) light—to treat your skin. This therapy helps to clear up plaques and reduce inflammation. Phototherapy involves either controlled sun exposure or exposing your skin to a specialized lamp and can include ultraviolet B (UVB), psoralen + ultraviolet A (PUVA) and excimer laser.

- Systemic medications: These medications reduce the inflammation underlying psoriasis. Examples include cyclosporine, methotrexate, PDE-4 inhibitors and biologic medications. And in 2022, the FDA approved a targeted therapy called a tyrosine kinase 2 (TYK2) inhibitor

that blocks inflammation-inducing proteins associated with psoriasis.

What you can do

In addition to medication, you can help reduce the symptoms of psoriasis by keeping skin moisturized, avoiding itchy or tight clothing, reducing stress and maintaining a healthy weight.

And remember: How you feel about your psoriasis is unique to you. For some, large patches may not be a problem, while others may feel embarrassed about just a few small ones. No matter how you feel, it's important to be open and honest with your healthcare provider. If your plaques are bothering you or embarrassment over your psoriasis is causing you to limit your activities, speak up! Together you can find a solution.

Are you settling for GOOD ENOUGH?

- Does your current treatment require messy creams, weekly injections or frequent blood tests?
- Are you getting okay but not consistently great results?
- Is your skin causing you to say no and miss out on plans?

If so, this might mean your treatment isn't all it could be. The good news is, there are many different treatment options available today that could help with the discomfort and itching.



YOU & YOUR CARE TEAM

Meet your psoriasis care team

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

Primary care physician (PCP):

This physician checks your overall health and likely diagnosed your psoriasis.

Dermatologist:

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

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 cope

with psychological and social issues related to your psoriasis.

Rheumatologist:

This physician specializes in treating joint conditions such as psoriatic arthritis.


Dermatology nurse:

This nurse has received

additional training in dermatology and may work with your doctor on your care.

Dietitian/ nutritionist:

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



COVER STORY

“My skin is in a good place—and I’m out of hiding!”

For years, Stevi Fore struggled with plaque psoriasis. But with the support of her medical team, she found the answer that would relieve the itch and clear the red, scaly patches. —BY DIANE HERBST

Stevi Fore, a 60-year-old grandmother, loves spending time with her 1-year-old granddaughter, whom she cares for each weekday. “I sing to her, I read to her,” says Stevi. “She is my most treasured gift.” On warm days, Stevi wears her favorite short-sleeved shirts as she pushes her granddaughter in a stroller.

But just several years ago, Stevi could not imagine feeling such joy. She was overwhelmed by her plaque psoriasis and ashamed to show her uncovered head, arms or legs in public, a burden made worse by the sudden and unexpected death of her husband.

“I thought my dry, itchy scalp was just dandruff”

Stevi’s journey with psoriasis began about a decade ago, while working as a nurse for a busy radiation oncology practice. “It was just an enormous amount of stress,” she says. “I didn’t know where it came from, but my scalp started getting itchy. It was red and began to have dryness, like dandruff.”

These red, dry itchy patches also appeared on the inner creases of both arms. “I hadn’t had any history of eczema or any skin disease before,” Stevi recalls. “This continued and would not resolve. No matter how much I shampooed my hair or cleansed my skin, it would just return and be drier, and sometimes it would present a little angrier than usual—really red and irritated and itchy.”

“My doctor helped me understand”

At her wits’ end, Stevi decided to reach out to Jerry Bagel, MD, a board-certified dermatologist and psoriasis specialist from Schweiger Dermatology Group in East Windsor, NJ. He diagnosed her with plaque psoriasis and prescribed a variety of topical medications.

“They were actually initially very effective,” recalls Stevi, who wanted to take a non-aggressive approach. “They would cause the flaring to dissipate for a little bit and then I’d be back in the doctor’s office getting another topical.”

Eventually, when the psoriasis intensified and the topicals no longer helped, Stevi re-

ceived injections of steroids into the affected areas. “That would cause things to quiet down just a little,” she says. “And then they would flare up again.” Stevi was offered the option of trying a biologic medication, because her physician felt it would be more effective, but she was reluctant to try it, fearing possible side effects. “Stevi sees all the commercials on TV that say these biologics give you cancer, which isn’t true,” says Dr. Bagel.

“I was ready to try something new”

Then during the summer of 2022, Stevi suffered the devastating loss of her beloved husband of 40 years, who died unexpectedly following respiratory distress. Her overwhelming grief caused a tremendous flare up of her psoriasis—with red, patchy, dry and scaly skin appearing on her inner thighs, her abdominal area and back as well as on her scalp and arms.

“My skin was in a really bad place,” she says. Stevi stopped wearing short sleeves, shorts, and bathing suits and wore a wig to cover her scalp. “It was very embarrassing,” she says. “I would not want anyone to see the areas that were irritated.”

“I feel 1000% better!”

Finally, in November of 2023, Stevi agreed to give a biologic a try. By then, she’d been part of a round of layoffs at work. Unemployed, with insufficient health insurance, she faced an unaffordable co-pay of \$22,000. Her dermatologist’s office had its own full-time biologic coordinator, however, and offered Stevi samples of the medication for treatment. “We hired somebody who can help people get medicines if they can’t afford it,” says Dr. Bagel.

The biologic completely changed her life. Almost immediately, the itching subsided, and her skin “started to quiet down.” “Before, you would see raised, dry, scaly skin exfoliating itself off of my body,” Stevi says. “But now, the raised red areas have subsided.”

And, she adds, “I didn’t have any side effects at all. It’s been nothing but wonderful. I feel one thousand percent better.”

Today, Stevi barely itches and is not embarrassed to wear short sleeves. “All of the skin abrasions that were on my thighs, my stomach, my scalp—everything is quiet,” she says. “Everything is resolved. I’m totally amazed. And I am grateful because I didn’t think it was going to ever resolve itself.” ●



“It’s been nothing but wonderful. I feel one thousand percent better.”

Photos by Brittany Breen Photo

Opening up to help others: Stevi’s top tips

Stevi feels passionate about sharing her journey with psoriasis, hoping she can help at least one person who may be suffering to find relief. “I want the world to know how wonderful my biologic treatment has been for me,” she says. “This is a means of giving back.”



Be willing to try new treatments.

“Don’t be reluctant to start a biologic. It has been a miraculous drug in my life and I’m so grateful,” Stevi says, and she suggests moving on from topicals quickly if they don’t work.



Keep the faith.

“You have to know there is life beyond psoriasis,” says Stevi. After the death of her husband, Stevi leaned heavily on her spirituality to help her get through her grief and loss. “It’s the Lord who has helped me through this ordeal,” she says, adding, “I have joyful days, I am optimistic and I look to the positive—and having beautiful skin enhances my ability to do it.”



Create a partnership with your doctor.

While dealing with psoriasis, Stevi has been faced with many challenges, but the tremendous support she receives from Dr. Bagel and his team eases her feelings of shame and isolation. “You feel alone, and due to how your skin looks, you feel unnecessarily or unfairly treated, like you have a contagious disease,” she says. Her supportive healthcare team gave her the confidence that she would find relief. “They’ve become family to me,” she says. “I’m very grateful and I truly love them.”

ONCE-DAILY
SOTYKTUTM
(deucravacitinib) 6 mg
tablets



Clearer skin. One pill. Once a day.

Find what may be possible with SOTYKTU.

In one study, 50% of people taking SOTYKTU saw clear or almost clear skin vs 9% taking placebo at 16 weeks.

There's only one SOTYKTU for adults with moderate to severe plaque psoriasis.

Visit [SOTYKTUresults.com](https://www.sotykturesults.com) and ask your dermatologist for

SOTYKTU (SOH-TIK-TOO) by name.



IMPORTANT FACTS

The information below does not take the place of talking with your healthcare professional. Only your healthcare professional knows the specifics of your condition and how SOTYKTU (deucravacitinib) may fit into your overall therapy. Talk to your healthcare professional if you have any questions about SOTYKTU (pronounced soh-tik-too).

What is SOTYKTU?

SOTYKTU is a prescription medicine used to treat adults with moderate to severe plaque psoriasis who may benefit from taking injections or pills (systemic therapy) or treatment using ultraviolet or UV light (phototherapy).

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

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

SOTYKTU may cause serious side effects, including:

• **Serious allergic reactions.** Stop taking SOTYKTU and get emergency medical help right away if you develop any of the following symptoms of a serious allergic reaction:

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

- **Infections.** SOTYKTU is a medicine that affects your immune system. SOTYKTU can lower the ability of your immune system to fight infections and can increase your risk of infections. Some people have had serious infections while taking SOTYKTU, such as infections of the lungs, including pneumonia and tuberculosis (TB), and COVID-19.
 - Your healthcare provider should check you for infections and TB before starting treatment with SOTYKTU.
 - Your healthcare provider may treat you for TB before you begin treatment with SOTYKTU 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 treatment with SOTYKTU.
 - If you get a serious infection, your healthcare provider may tell you to stop taking SOTYKTU until your infection is controlled.

SOTYKTU should not be used in people with an active, serious infection, including localized infections. You should not start taking SOTYKTU if you have any kind of infection unless your healthcare provider tells you it is okay.

You may be at a higher risk of developing shingles (herpes zoster).

Before starting SOTYKTU, tell your healthcare provider if you:

- are being treated for an infection
- have had an infection that does not go away or keeps coming back
- have TB or have been in close contact with someone with TB
- have or have had hepatitis B or C
- think you have an infection or have symptoms of an infection such as:
 - fever, sweats, or chills
 - muscle aches
 - weight loss
 - cough
 - shortness of breath
 - blood in your phlegm (mucus)
 - warm, red, or painful skin or sores on your body different from your psoriasis
 - diarrhea or stomach pain
 - burning when you urinate or urinating more often than normal
 - feeling very tired

After you start taking SOTYKTU (deucravacitinib), call your healthcare provider right away if you have an infection or have symptoms of an infection.

SOTYKTU can make you more likely to get infections or make any infections you have worse.

- **Cancer.** Certain kinds of cancer including lymphoma have been reported in people taking SOTYKTU.
 - Tell your healthcare provider if you have ever had any type of cancer.
- **Muscle problems (rhabdomyolysis).** SOTYKTU can cause muscle problems that can be severe. Treatment with SOTYKTU may increase the level of an enzyme in your blood called creatine phosphokinase (CPK) and can be a sign of muscle damage. Increased CPK is common in people taking SOTYKTU. Your healthcare provider may tell you to stop taking SOTYKTU if the amount of CPK in your blood gets too high or if you have signs and symptoms of severe muscle problems. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any of these signs or symptoms of severe muscle problems:
 - unexplained muscle pain, tenderness, or weakness
 - fever
 - dark-colored urine
 - feeling very tired

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

Do not take SOTYKTU if you are allergic to deucravacitinib or any of the ingredients in SOTYKTU. See the end of this Medication Guide for a complete list of ingredients in SOTYKTU.

Before taking SOTYKTU, tell your healthcare provider about all of your medical conditions, including if you:

- See “What is the most important information I should know about SOTYKTU?”

IT'S LIKE THE FEELING

OF FINDING

YOU'RE SO READY FOR

YOUR CLOSE-UP.

- have liver problems or kidney problems
- have high levels of fat in your blood (triglycerides)
- have recently received or are scheduled to receive an immunization (vaccine). You should avoid receiving live vaccines during treatment with SOTYKTU (deucravacitinib).
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if SOTYKTU can harm your unborn baby.
 - Report pregnancies to the Bristol-Myers Squibb Company's Adverse Event reporting line at 1-800-721-5072.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if SOTYKTU passes into your breast milk.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription medicines, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Keep a list of them to show your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.

How should I take SOTYKTU?

- Take SOTYKTU exactly as your healthcare provider tells you to take it.
- Take SOTYKTU 1 time every day.
- Take SOTYKTU with or without food.
- Do not crush, cut, or chew the SOTYKTU tablets.

What are the possible side effects of SOTYKTU?

SOTYKTU may cause serious side effects, including:

- See “What is the most important information I should know about SOTYKTU?”
- **Changes in certain laboratory test results.** Changes in laboratory tests have happened in some people taking SOTYKTU. Your healthcare provider may do blood tests before you start taking SOTYKTU and during treatment with SOTYKTU to check for the following:
 - **Increased triglycerides.** Triglycerides are a type of fat found in your blood. Too much fat in your blood can cause problems with your heart.
 - **Increased liver enzymes.** Liver enzymes are found in your blood and help to tell if your liver is functioning normally. If your liver enzymes increase too much, your healthcare provider may need to do additional tests on your liver and may tell you to stop taking SOTYKTU if they think that SOTYKTU is harming your liver.
- **Potential risks from Janus kinase (JAK) inhibition.** SOTYKTU is a tyrosine kinase 2 (TYK2) inhibitor. TYK2 is in the JAK family. It is not known whether taking SOTYKTU has the same risks as taking JAK inhibitors. Increased risk of death (all causes) has happened in people who were 50 years of age and older with at least 1 heart disease (cardiovascular) risk factor who were taking a JAK inhibitor used to treat rheumatoid arthritis (RA) compared to people taking another medicine in a class of medicines called TNF blockers. SOTYKTU is not for use in people with RA.

The most common side effects of SOTYKTU include: common cold, sore throat, and sinus infection (upper respiratory infections), cold sores (herpes simplex), sores on inner lips, gums, tongue, or roof of the mouth (canker sores), inflamed hair pores (folliculitis), and acne. These are not all of the possible side effects of SOTYKTU.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

How should I store SOTYKTU?

Store SOTYKTU at room temperature between 68°F to 77°F (20°C to 25°C).

Keep SOTYKTU and all medicines out of the reach of children.

General information about the safe and effective use of SOTYKTU.

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Medication Guide. Do not use SOTYKTU for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give SOTYKTU to other people, even if they have the same symptoms that you have. It may harm them. You can ask your pharmacist or healthcare provider for information about SOTYKTU that is written for health professionals. For more product information about SOTYKTU, go to website (www.sotyktu.com) or call SOTYKTU 360 SUPPORT at 1.888.SOTYKTU (768.9588).

What are the ingredients in SOTYKTU?

Active ingredient: deucravacitinib.

Inactive ingredients: anhydrous lactose, croscarmellose sodium, hypromellose acetate succinate, magnesium stearate, microcrystalline cellulose and silicon dioxide. In addition, the film coating Opadry® II Pink contains the following inactive ingredients: polyvinyl alcohol, titanium dioxide, polyethylene glycol, talc, iron oxide red and yellow.

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1787-US-2400060 02/24



“We’re getting the upper hand on psoriasis!”

From finding the right moisturizer to dancing away itchy skin, Tracy and Whitney aren’t letting psoriasis hold them back. Read on for more of their strategies and ask your healthcare provider if they make sense for you, too. —BY JOANA MANGUNE

“Have an ‘A-game’ mindset”

TRACY DAVENPORT
CENTREVILLE, MD

Look into new treatments.

“I’ve had psoriasis since at least the age of 12. Every winter my legs got a super itchy rash on them. My mom had the exact same symptoms, but back when I was younger we only knew to put lotion on our skin to help the itch,”

shares Tracy. “Now I’m a health educator for a lot of different diseases (tracyshealthyliving.com) and a performance coach for athletes. That means I spend a lot of time doing medical research, which led to me learning so much about psoriatic disease and all the amazing treatments that are out there for it now. Because of that, today I am on a systemic medication that helps control my flares.”

Keep lotions and creams handy.

“I still moisturize like crazy; at least several times a day—it’s still part of my treatment plan! I always check the ingredients of any creams I buy to make sure they don’t contain any of my known triggers, and I choose ones that are thicker and stay on longer. My go-tos are cocoa butter, and psoriasis-friendly moisturizers like those by CeraVe.”

Make a plan for nighttime itchy skin.

“When it comes to psoriasis itch, I will end up scratching my skin while I sleep. I try to let my doctor know quickly if I find that itch is getting worse, so he can call in a medicated cream or some other solution to tide me over until my next appointment. I also make sure that I have soft cotton sheets and pajamas so my skin is able to breathe and feels comfortable at night.”

Spend time under the sun.

“I try to get some sun exposure every day, even in the winter. Not enough sun can cause a flare for me—but so can too much, so I have to maintain a balance. Sometimes I enjoy rowing, but mostly I walk outdoors with friends and bike with my husband. If we’re going to be outside for longer than 15 minutes, I bring a long-sleeved shirt and hat to put on after a few minutes to avoid too much exposure.” ▶



Photos by Emily Troutman



“Steer your own ship!”

WHITNEY MALDONADO
LONG BEACH, MS

Find a doctor who gets you.

“Psoriasis is something that you have to deal with forever—it’s a relationship you never asked for,” Whitney laughs. “That’s why it’s so important to find a doctor who listens to you and makes you feel heard, because you’re going to need their help indefinitely. I’m very lucky because I happened to meet with the best dermatologist right off the bat! She always checks on me and asks me how I feel.”

Keep a journal.

“My husband, Tobias, always amps me up and makes me feel like I can get through this. He’s been so sweet and supportive. He even helped me start a medical journal. I would get overwhelmed at my doctor appointments, so he gave me a little notebook and a cool pen. There, I would write down my thoughts and include any research I’ve done. Or if I have a question, I write it down and bring it to my doctor’s appointment. If I read some-

thing online, I make a note in it to ask my doctor about it. It’s my way of being my own captain and steering the ship. It has made me feel like I wasn’t just along for the ride anymore—I was taking control.”

Create connections.

“After I got diagnosed, I felt lost and didn’t know what to do. So in 2017, I decided that I wanted to help advocate for psoriasis. I called the National Psoriasis Foundation, and they loved my energy! They told me about a grant and invited me to come volunteer at a convention they were hosting in Chicago. I went and being around this large group of people was very humbling and uplifting. There are people out there who are going through serious situations—and they’re still smiling! Their website, psoriasis.org, is a great resource, and if you can’t make it to a convention, they have an online chat where you can connect with other patients.”

Find things that make you happy.

“Stress triggers my psoriasis, so my doctor told me to find a stress reliever. I picked up cross stitching, and that’s been very soothing. Also, I’m an elder-

millennial and love having dance parties to late 90s and early 2000s music. It makes me forget about my worries.”

Wash your makeup brushes.

“They’re not self-cleaning,” Whitney says who shares skincare and makeup tips on TikTok [@whitnaaayyy](https://www.tiktok.com/@whitnaaayyy). “We all know how important it is to wash our faces every day, but it’s equally important to clean our makeup tools to protect our skin from bacteria. I like to use baby shampoo. It’s an affordable and gentle way to clean makeup brushes.” ●

Health Monitor

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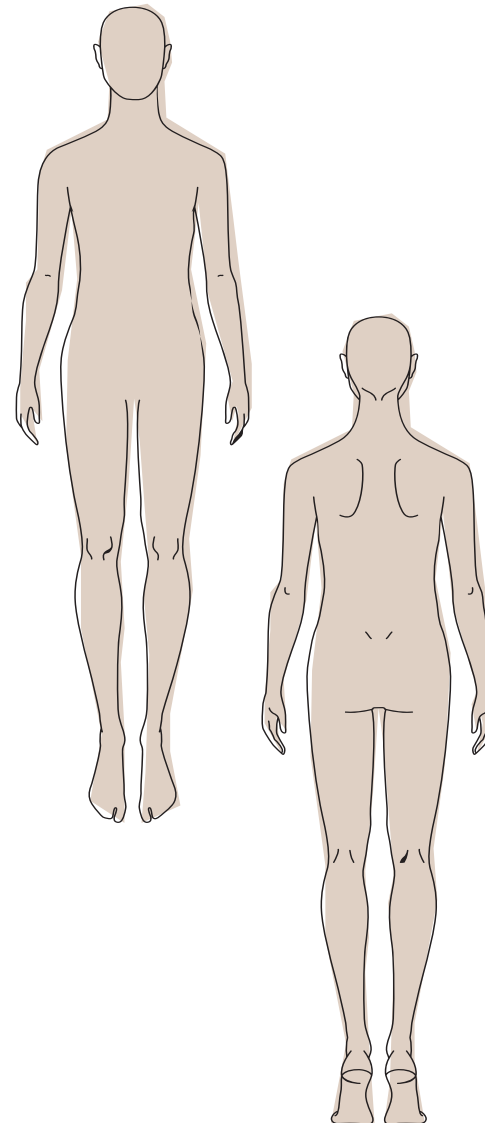
Photos by Whitney Maldonado

YOU & YOUR CARE TEAM

How well is your treatment working?

Whether you’ve just been diagnosed or have been living with psoriasis for a while, you’ll benefit from having an open discussion with your healthcare provider. It’s a key step toward assessing your current treatment and determining if you have a better path to clearer skin.

1. Which areas of your body have plaques? Please indicate by marking the areas on the diagram below.



2. How bothered are you by symptoms? Please rate on a scale from 1 (not very much) to 5 (always/almost always):

My skin is itchy.	1	2	3	4	5
My skin bleeds.	1	2	3	4	5
I can’t sleep well.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel embarrassed by visible plaques.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel sad and hopeless.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel anxious or on edge.	1	2	3	4	5

3. Assess your treatment

I would rate my current treatment as:

- It’s working great.
- It’s working okay, but I’d like to see more improvement.
- I don’t feel my psoriasis is controlled at all.

In the past, I’ve stopped treatment because:

- It didn’t work well enough.
- It worked for a while, then stopped.
- It had unwanted side effects.
- It was too time-consuming.
- I don’t like injections.
- I disliked the lab monitoring.
- I couldn’t afford it.

4. Previous treatments:

Topicals you tried but no longer use: _____

Any current topicals: _____

Phototherapy you tried but no longer use: _____

Any current phototherapy treatments: _____

Systemic medications you tried but no longer use: _____

Any current systemics: _____



Q

Exercise and plaque psoriasis I typically exercise for an hour every morning, and I was told that it could benefit certain symptoms of psoriasis. In my experience, though, when I sweat it causes even more itchiness and redness. How can I keep working out without making my psoriasis worse?

A

Answers to your questions on managing plaque psoriasis

A: Exercise is great for your heart, your mind and your body, which is why you should keep at it. If sweat is causing your skin symptoms to worsen, finding an effective treatment for your psoriasis is your best bet. This will likely involve a discussion with your health-care provider about using prescription medications. But there are also everyday things you can do to protect your skin. A key one? Making sure you shower as

soon as possible after sweating—that way the irritants are removed before they can settle in and trigger a flare. Make sure to use a gentle soap, and moisturize as soon as you’re done showering, while skin is still damp. This will seal in moisture to your skin and further help prevent those red, itchy patches.

INJECTABLE BIOLOGICS VS ORAL PILLS

Q: *I have been taking an in-*

jectable biologic for my psoriasis for years. As I get older and become busier with my job and family life, it’s more challenging to find time to make that infusion appointment. I spoke with my doctor about other options, and he mentioned an oral pill. What are the main differences between an oral pill and an injectable biologic?

A: When it comes to oral medication for psoriasis, the newer options are much safer and more effec-

tive than the oral medications of the past. That said, people respond uniquely to the different versions—what works for one person may not work for the next and vice versa. To find the ideal method for you, it is important to speak to your doctor. You’ll want to discuss the pros and cons of the different options. And if you do switch, keep track of how well the new option is treating your psoriasis, if you’re experiencing any side effects, and any questions you may have about your new medication for your next visit. ●

OUR EXPERT:

Mark G. Lebwohl, MD, Dean for Clinical Therapeutics, professor and chairman emeritus at Kimberly and Eric J. Waldman Department of Dermatology, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York

RESOURCES THAT CAN HELP

Looking for more information or care? Try one of these trustworthy sites...

Still have questions about psoriasis?

- National Psoriasis Foundation [psoriasis.org](https://www.psoriasis.org)
- The American Academy of Dermatology [aad.org](https://www.aad.org)
- National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases [niams.nih.gov/health-topics/psoriasis](https://www.niams.nih.gov/health-topics/psoriasis)

Struggling with psoriatic arthritis?

- Creaky Joints [creakyjoints.org](https://www.creakyjoints.org)
- Arthritis Foundation [arthritis.org](https://www.arthritis.org)

Looking for mental healthcare?

- GoodTherapy [goodtherapy.org](https://www.goodtherapy.org)
- National Institute of Mental Health [nimh.nih.gov](https://www.nimh.nih.gov)
- American Psychological Association Psychologist Locator locator.apa.org
- *Psychology Today* Therapist Finder [psychologytoday.com](https://www.psychologytoday.com)

Need help with payment assistance?

- Medicine Assistance Tool [mat.org](https://www.mat.org)
- National Patient Advocate Foundation [npaf.org](https://www.npaf.org)
- Needy Meds [needymeds.org](https://www.needymeds.org)
- PAN Foundation [panfoundation.org](https://www.panfoundation.org)





STOP FLARES FROM STEALING YOUR JOY WITH *simple stress-busters!*

Plaque psoriasis flares can create stress, and stress can bring on plaque psoriasis flares. How to avoid this “psoriasis/stress spiral?” We asked National Institutes of Mental Health stress-management expert and licensed clinical psychologist Krystal Lewis, PhD, for her top tips—read on to see if any of them might work for you.

—BY SARA ROTONDI

We all experience small stressors throughout the day—things like spilling your morning coffee or discovering the top you wanted to wear is in the wash. Taken in stride, these won't have any long-term impact on your health. The issue is when a bunch of small stressors strikes at once, or you get hit with a big one—something financial, say, or maybe related to your job or relationships. That level of anxiety can cause a buildup of the stress hormone cortisol, leading to inflammation that can trigger a flare or worsen an existing one.

The first step to stopping this cycle? Taking moments throughout the day to actively acknowledge how you're feeling, says Dr. Lewis. If your stress levels seem high, turn to an on-the-spot tension tamer, like the ones shown here.

POSTURE EXERCISES

Research in the journal *Health Psychology* found that maintaining an upright posture—meaning not slumping!—boosted mood in study participants coping with stress. Over time, in fact, researchers believe the practice may even help build resilience to stress, especially when combined with deep breathing.

Here are some easy moves to try:



Seated spine lengthener.

Start by sitting at the edge of your chair. Place both hands (palms down) underneath your thighs. Think of keeping your spine long and your chin tucked. Take 8-10 deep breaths.



Standing tall pose.

Start in standing position. Feel your feet as they maintain contact with the earth. Keep your chin tucked, your spine long. Clasp your hands behind your lower back. Think of slightly lifting your whole body through the chest. Focus on eight to 10 deep breaths, then release.

MEDITATION

Not only are there many different types of meditation, but, says Dr. Lewis, “they are generally simple enough to do anywhere and at any time.” She recommends identifying a few methods that work best for you, then choosing whichever makes sense in the moment.

Here are some of Dr. Lewis's favorites.



Stay in the present *with sensory meditation.*

“Our senses help us to stay in tune with what is happening in the world so we're more centered in the moment and less focused on ‘what ifs?’ ” Dr. Lewis explains. Sensory meditation can include:

Taking a mindful minute. Take 60 seconds to look for five things you can see, four things you can touch, three things you can hear, two things you can smell and one thing you can taste.

Lighting a candle. Once lit, focus on the flickering flame while also making note of the scent, concentrating on the small details of what's in front of you. Do this for at least a minute.

Focusing on flavor. Grab your favorite piece of candy or snack and take a bite. Chew slowly and try to make the food last for 20-30 bites as you focus on its taste, temperature and texture.

Tuning in to music. Put on a favorite song, close your eyes, and take deep breaths as you listen. For 30 seconds each, try to concentrate on only one element of the music—start with the drums, say, then just the piano or guitar, then just the person singing.



Calm your mind *by recalibrating your thoughts.*

Meditation where you focus on your own body can help direct your thoughts inward, allowing you to sit with yourself without judgment, and can be especially helpful if you're struggling with negative or racing thoughts. Build on these step-by-step:

First, tune in to your current state. Sit in a calm, quiet and comfortable place and close your eyes. Simply let yourself be for 60 seconds. Acknowledge any thoughts that come up and any feelings you have about them, then let them pass.

Focus on your breath. For the next minute, focus on the pattern of your breathing. Inhale through your nose and exhale from your mouth, feeling your chest and stomach expand and deflate in time.

Concentrate on your whole body. Next, expand your awareness into what you're feeling in your limbs, torso, neck and head. Concentrate on one part of your body at a time.

Expand into your environment. Last, turn your thoughts outside yourself to focus on your immediate surroundings. If you prefer to keep your eyes closed you can focus on sounds, such as birds chirping outside or the wind. When done, take a deep breath, open your eyes and continue with your day. ●

GOOD STRESS? *You bet!*

It's called eustress—the type that you feel when doing something fun, like playing a sport, riding a rollercoaster or pursuing a hobby. “This is a type of stress that actually feels enjoyable,” says Dr. Lewis. “You're having a good time while experiencing it, and it also typically motivates you to keep pursuing that activity.” The best part? Eustress actually offsets the negative effects of regular stress, so doing activities that produce that feeling not only can make you feel good, but it can also have an overall positive effect on your health—and help lessen psoriasis flares!

Catch on to *Korean skincare trends!*

Korean skincare products have gone viral on social media, but can they help plaque psoriasis symptoms? Sharmeen Kazmi, senior skincare chemist with L'Oreal, shares her expertise on what these popular ingredients can do for *your* skin. —BY RIKKI ECCLES



To tame flares, try products that contain...
CICA

Pronounced “see-ca,” this leafy green herb is commonly used in products for sensitive skin because it’s known for being both extra-soothing and moisturizing. “It is rich in amino acids, fatty acids and phytochemicals, all of which help nourish facial skin,” says Kazmi. “And it can be beneficial for someone with plaque psoriasis because it has natural anti-inflammatory properties.” While cica can be found in American-made skincare products, it’s typically used in higher concentrations in Korean versions.

One to try: VT COSMETICS Cica Cream – Cicalio Facial Care Cream, **\$23.20 on Amazon.com.**

To improve collagen balance, try products with...
BEE VENOM

Ironically, while most people struggle with having too little collagen as they age, studies have shown that skin impacted by psoriasis can actually produce too much—but that the collagen produced degrades at a faster rate due to inflammation. That’s where bee venom can come in—it helps balance collagen levels, improving both skin firmness and elasticity. “It also helps to reduce inflammation and has natural antibacterial benefits, which can help soothe active plaques,” Kazmi says.

One to try: MISSHA Bee Pollen Renew Ampouler, **\$15 on YesStyle.com.**



Selecting a Korean sunscreen? CHECK THE PA+ RATING SYSTEM!

“Whether you have psoriasis or not, wearing sunscreen every day is an absolute must,” says Sam Ellis, MD, a medical and cosmetic dermatologist, who adds Korean products can sometimes provide more comprehensive—and less skin-irritating—sun protection.

But the first thing to keep in mind is understanding their UV rating system. “You will typically see the letters ‘PA’ listed on their products followed by a number of plus signs,” he explains. “The more plus signs, the higher the level of UV protection, with one being the lowest (and equal to about an SPF 10) and four being the highest (and equal to an SPF of about 50).”

One he recommends: Haruharu WONDER PA++++ Daily Sunscreen, **\$14.45 on Amazon.**

To help your skin retain moisture, try products with...
SNAIL MUCIN

“This is an ingredient that has been around for some time overseas but is gaining a lot of momentum in the U.S. recently,” Kazmi says. Snail mucin is naturally produced by the critters to help them stay moist and move. “It is amazing for hydration because it’s rich in humectants and polysaccharides—ingredients that help prevent water loss from not only your skin, but also your hair and nails,” says Kazmi. And don’t worry, no snails are harmed in the harvesting of the ingredient!

One to try: Beauty of Joseon Revive Snail Mucin Ginseng Serum, **\$17 on Amazon.com.**

To strengthen your skin barrier, try products with...
CERAMIDES

Ceramides are fatty acids that are a major component of the outer layer of the skin. They are important for retaining moisture and protecting the skin from irritants—a major factor in helping to prevent environmental triggers from causing a flare and also helping to soothe itching.

One to try: Aestura AtoBarrier 365 cream, **\$32 on Amazon.com.**

IMPROVE YOUR SKIN FROM HEAD TO TOE!

While many popular Korean skincare products are designed for the face, there are options to help the rest of your body, too.

So if you struggle with...

Scalp psoriasis, try:
Aromatica Rosemary Scalp Scaling Shampoo.

Free of sulfates, silicones and parabens, this shampoo helps gently remove build-up on the scalp and reduce the irritation, itching and flaking that is common with scalp plaques. **\$25 on Amazon.com.**

Hand psoriasis, try:
PRETTYSKIN The Pure JEJU Cica Waterfull Hand Cream.

Contains cica as well as chamomile and aloe vera extracts, which will help to restore the moisture in your hands while providing a protective barrier against irritants. **\$10 on Amazon.com.**

Psoriasis on your feet, try:
Jigott Snail Moisture Foot Cream.

Ideal for dry or cracked feet—heels in particular—this cream contains snail mucin that can penetrate the thick skin typically found on this part of the body and remoisturize it. **\$9 on Amazon.com.**

Psoriasis on the rest of your body, try:
ILLIYOON Ceramide Ato Lotion.

Containing skin barrier-saving ceramides, this body lotion has been proven gentle enough to be safe for infants. **\$30 on Amazon.com. ●**



Health Monitor Living

Questions to ask at today's exam



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



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



If not, can you suggest a new treatment?



How long will it take before we can determine if the new treatment is working? Will I need lab testing?



Does this treatment require injections? Is there an oral option available?



When should I make my next appointment to see you?



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.