



Living well with psoriasis

Psoriasis is a condition that causes a rash with itchy, scaly, and sometimes painful patches on the knees, arms, trunk, and scalp.



There are different types of psoriasis. Sometimes, a person may have one type of psoriasis and it later turns into another type. Experts aren't sure what causes psoriasis, but they believe the immune system and a person's genes are involved.

Fortunately, there are ways to help manage this condition and live a healthy life with this disease. Try these tips:

- **Know your triggers.** Many people find that psoriasis flares up at certain times. Stress, skin injury, certain medications, infections, smoking, or illnesses can cause a psoriasis flare-up. Talk with your doctor about healthy ways to avoid your triggers.
- **Focus on all-around good health.** A healthy diet and exercise will help you manage psoriasis. For example, being overweight can make psoriasis worse. In addition, people with psoriasis are at a higher risk of getting heart disease and diabetes.
- **Work with your doctor to manage itching.** Many people with psoriasis have itching that interferes with life. Keeping skin moisturized, cold packs and over-the-counter itch creams may help. If these remedies don't work, ask your doctor about prescription options.
- **Ask about light therapy.** Phototherapy, or light therapy, is a first line treatment for moderate to severe psoriasis. It exposes the skin to controlled amounts of natural or artificial light to slow the growth of the affected skin cells. Tanning beds cannot be used for this therapy because the exact spectrum and dose of light cannot be controlled.
- **Keep mental health in mind.** Some people with psoriasis get depression or anxiety. Plus, your mental health plays an important role in overall health. See your doctor and ask about treatment for these conditions.
- **Don't smoke.** Smoking puts stress on the body and harms the immune system and skin.
- **Don't stop taking medicines without your doctor's approval.** If you suddenly stop your psoriasis medicine, it can make the psoriasis more severe. If you need help paying for your medication, talk to your doctor. There may be financial assistance programs available for people with psoriasis.