



psoriasis**SPEAKS**

BENEATH
~~~~~*the*~~~~~  
**SURFACE**

**SOME PEOPLE MAY THINK PSORIASIS  
IS JUST A SKIN CONDITION**

**BECAUSE THE SYMPTOMS APPEAR  
ON YOUR SKIN'S SURFACE**

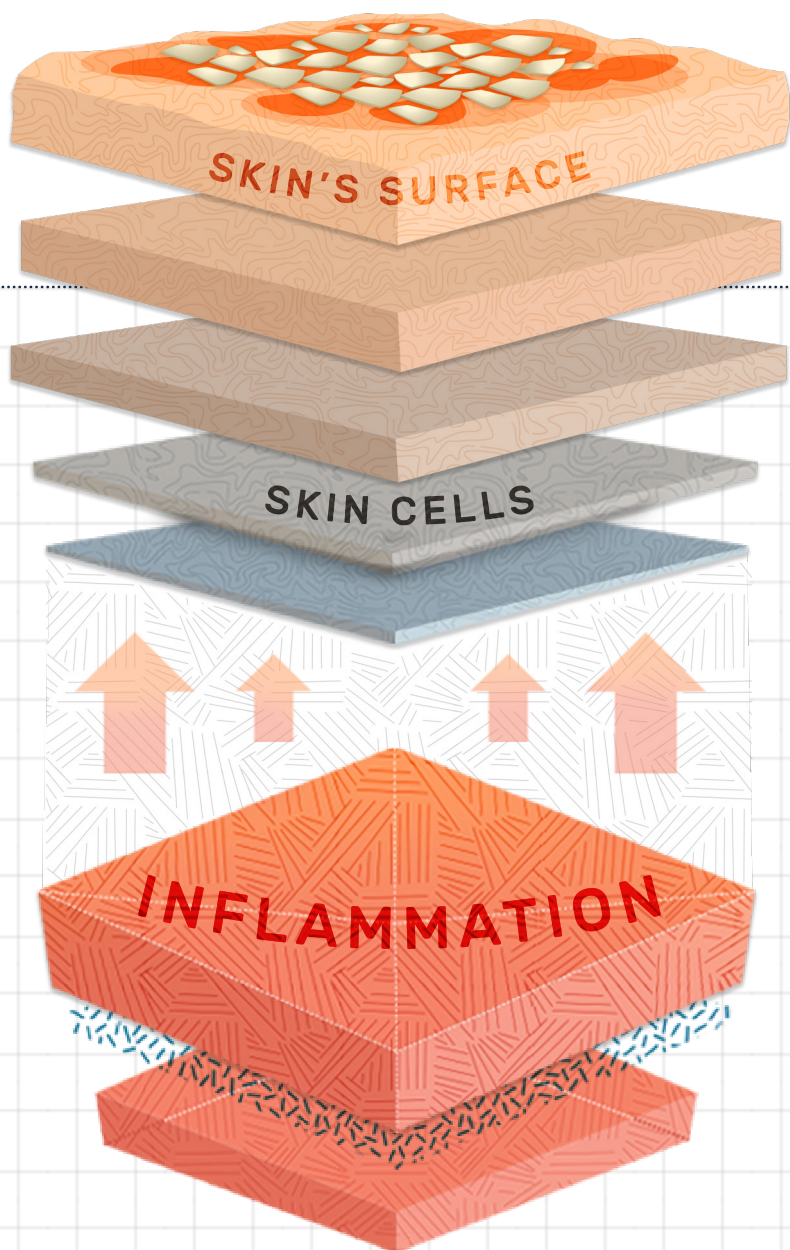
**BUT IF YOU TAKE A DEEPER  
LOOK, YOU'LL LEARN....**

## **PSORIASIS STARTS BENEATH THE SURFACE**

Yes, psoriasis is an inflammatory condition that causes red, scaly patches to appear on your skin. But soon, you'll discover that these symptoms actually begin inside your body. You'll also learn about triggers, flare-ups, and how doctors determine the severity of psoriasis. But most importantly, you'll get the information you need to talk to your doctor about managing your psoriasis.

***Let's get started.***

# INFLAMMATION: THE SOURCE OF YOUR SYMPTOMS



You may think psoriasis starts and ends with the skin—but your symptoms are actually the result of an imbalance *inside* your body.

In healthy bodies, the immune system uses inflammation to protect you. But for people with psoriasis, the immune system is overactive, creating excess inflammation.

While the exact cause of psoriasis is unknown, chronic inflammation may play a role.

The result of this process is accelerated skin cell growth.

When the skin cells can't be shed quickly enough, they pile up to become the plaques you see on your skin.

To gain a better understanding of psoriasis, start within. That way, you'll be better prepared to talk with a doctor about managing inflammation.

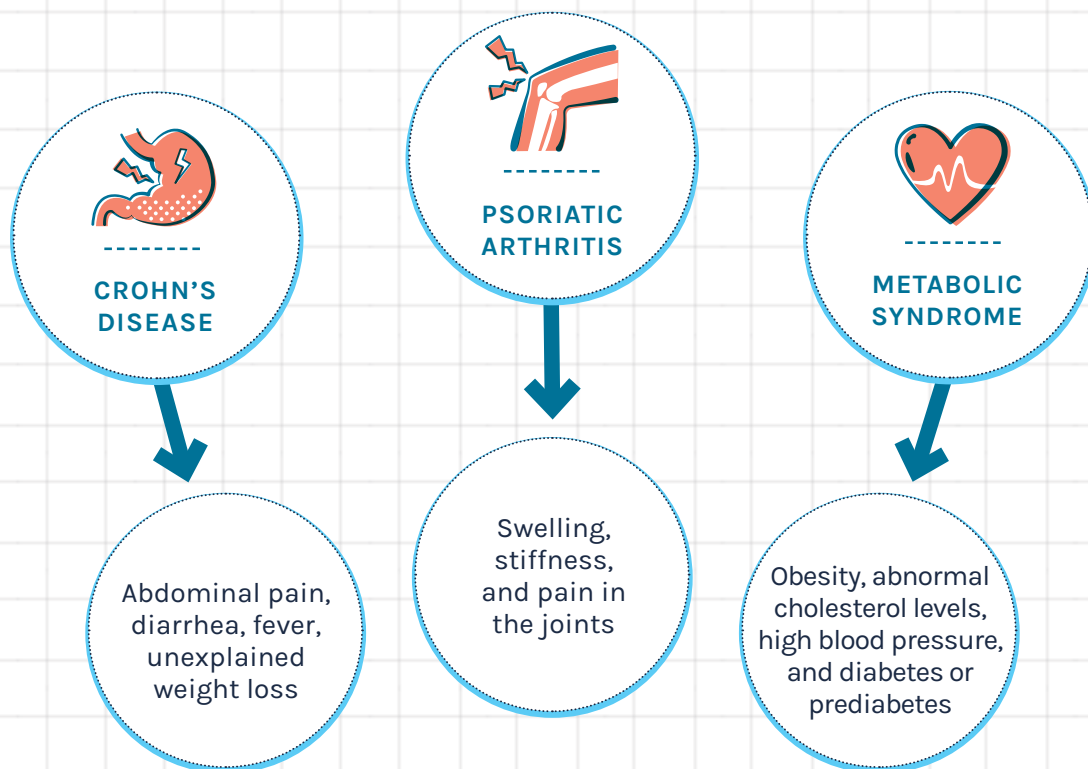
TO LEARN MORE, VISIT  
[PSORIASIS.COM/INFLAMMATION](https://psoriasis.com/inflammation)

# THE LINK BETWEEN PSORIASIS AND COMORBIDITIES

We've seen how inflammation plays a role in psoriasis—but what else can it contribute to? Chronic inflammation may also contribute to other conditions that can occur alongside psoriasis, known as comorbidities. However, psoriasis is not thought to cause these conditions or vice versa.

Comorbidities are when one or more additional conditions occur in a person who already has a chronic condition, like psoriasis. In the chart below, you'll see how inflammation can contribute to various comorbidities that affect other areas of the body, not just the skin.

**Learn more about the symptoms of common psoriasis comorbidities.**



**Your doctor or dermatologist will screen you to identify potential comorbidities and may refer you to a different doctor for further care.**

## POP QUIZ: SYMPTOMS AND TRIGGERS



It's important to recognize and understand your symptoms and triggers. Not just for you, but for your dermatologist as well. Every case of psoriasis is different, so knowing how you're personally affected can help your doctor manage your psoriasis appropriately.

So, how well do you know the symptoms and triggers of psoriasis?

*Take the quiz on the following page to find out.*



## WHAT ARE FLARE-UPS?

Flare-ups are when psoriasis symptoms reappear or worsen. They can happen seasonally, because of triggers, or randomly. Flare-ups are a natural part of psoriasis, but you may not have to accept them. Talk to your doctor about ways to manage flare-ups.

Get prepared to talk about your condition with your doctor.  
Take our short symptom quiz at **[PSORIASIS.COM/SYMPTOMS](https://www.psoriasis.com/symptoms)**

# TAKE THE QUIZ

Use the answers at the bottom of the page to see how you did.



**1** Which of the following is NOT a common symptom of psoriasis?

- a. Itchy, burning skin
- b. Raised, red lesions
- c. Headaches
- d. Pitted nails

**2** Which of the following is a trigger for psoriasis?

- a. Cold weather
- b. Stress
- c. Smoking
- d. All of the above

**3** True or False:  
An injury to the skin can trigger a psoriasis flare-up.

**4** True or False:  
Triggers affect everyone with psoriasis differently.

**5** Which food, when eaten in excess, may trigger inflammation?

- a. Fruit
- b. Fish
- c. Fatty red meat
- d. Water

**6** Which season can be the worst for psoriasis flare-ups?

- a. Winter
- b. Spring
- c. Summer
- d. Fall

## ANSWER KEY:

Question 1: C: Headaches

Question 3: True

Question 5: C: Fatty red meat

Question 2: D: All of the above

Question 4: True

Question 6: A: Winter

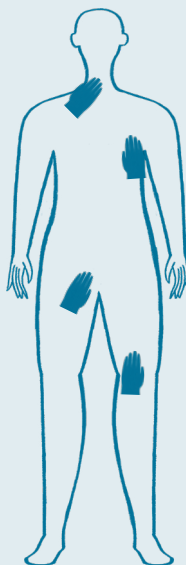
# PSORIASIS SEVERITY EXPLAINED

Psoriasis severity is an individual story—one that considers both the physical and personal impact of your condition. Discuss all aspects of severity with your dermatologist, so they can accurately assess your level of severity and offer an appropriate treatment plan.

*Learn about the different factors below that help your doctor to determine severity.*

## BODY SURFACE AREA

A primary factor is how much of your body is covered with plaques. A common way to measure this is by using your hand—one hand print (with fingers pressed together, like you're wearing a mitten) equals roughly 1% of your body's surface area. Your doctor will evaluate the percentage of your body that is covered in plaques to determine the severity of your psoriasis.



**<3%**  
MILD

**3%-10%**  
MODERATE

**>10%**  
SEVERE

## INTENSITY OF SYMPTOMS



A doctor will also look at how intense your physical symptoms are. This could mean intensity of redness, thickness of plaques, or scaling.

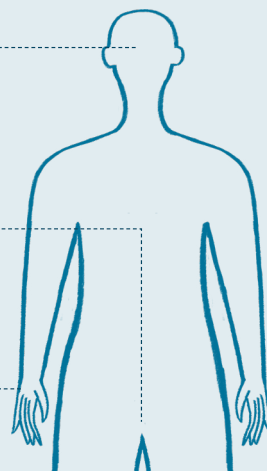
## LOCATION

In some cases, location of symptoms can also help determine your severity level. This could mean locations that are more visible, embarrassing, or irritating. See some examples on the figure to the right.

FACE/NECK

GENITALS

HANDS/  
FEET



## PERSONAL IMPACT

Psoriasis is more than just a physical condition, so the personal impact is also considered. It's important to have an open conversation with your doctor about how psoriasis affects your emotional well-being, day-to-day activities, and even your relationships with others.

# EXPRESS YOURSELF

Psoriasis can affect you both physically and personally. And for some, it can even impact day-to-day life. Print this journal and use it to jot down some useful information. Then bring it to your dermatologist so they can understand how psoriasis impacts you.

1. What are your short-term treatment goals? (1-6 months)

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2. What are your long-term treatment goals? (6-12 months)

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3. Psoriasis makes me feel...  
(circle all that apply)



IN PAIN



EMBARRASSED



OVER IT



SAD



ANGRY

4. How has psoriasis affected your hobbies or day-to-day activities?



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.....

.....



## 5. How much of your body is affected by symptoms?



<3%

3%-10%

>10%

## 6. What symptoms do you experience? (check all that apply)

☐ ITCHY, SORE, OR PAINFUL SKIN

☐ SCALY, SILVERY PLAQUES

☐ CRACKED, DRY SKIN THAT MAY BLEED

☐ RAISED, RED LESIONS

☐ PITTED NAILS

☐ SMALL, RED, INDIVIDUAL SPOTS

## 7. What are your psoriasis triggers? .....

## 8. What treatments have you tried? (check all that apply)

☐ HOME REMEDIES

☐ DIET/LIFESTYLE

☐ PHOTOTHERAPY

☐ TOPICAL MEDICATIONS

☐ ORAL SYSTEMICS

☐ BIOLOGICS

## 9. List any questions you have about your psoriasis:

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# MEET YOUR PSORIASIS ALL-STARS

Every member of your team brings something unique to the table, whether it's helping you get on the right treatment plan or just being there to share in your daily triumphs. Here are some tips for talking about psoriasis with some of your most trusted teammates.



## TEAM MEMBER

### DERMATOLOGIST

*Think of your dermatologist as a partner—they should listen to your needs and goals and work with you to find a treatment plan that helps to meet them.*

- Be open about all aspects of your psoriasis, physical and non-physical. Each case is unique, and knowing the full story will help them manage your psoriasis appropriately.
- Don't settle. If you're not seeing the results you want, ask about changing your treatment plan.

## TEAM MEMBER

### PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN (PCP)

*Even if you're seeing a specialist, your PCP will play a key role in managing your overall health, monitoring you for risks of comorbidities, and helping to manage any comorbidities that may appear.*

- Discuss any new symptoms you're experiencing. Your PCP can help identify the signs and symptoms of related conditions.
- You may have limited access to a dermatologist because of location or your insurance plan. A good place to start is by asking your PCP for a referral.



## TEAM MEMBER

# OTHER SPECIALISTS

*Based on your needs, specialists such as rheumatologists, nutritionists, and mental health providers can all provide specialized insights for different aspects of your psoriasis.*

- 1 out of 3 people with psoriasis will also experience joint pain associated with psoriatic arthritis, which a rheumatologist can help you manage.
- Some nutritionists may recommend adjusting your diet to help reduce inflammation.
- Mental health providers can help you deal with the emotional toll of psoriasis. People with psoriatic disease are at least 1.5x more likely to experience depression.

## TEAM MEMBER

# ONLINE COMMUNITIES

*Psoriasis may be a personal journey—but there are plenty of communities that can offer advice, education, and support along the way. It's important to remember that these communities do not take the place of proper medical care, but they can still be helpful.*

- Try joining an online forum. They're great for sharing stories, asking questions, and getting inspiration from people with psoriasis just like you.
- Do your homework. Groups like psoriasisSPEAKS and the National Psoriasis Foundation have great resources for learning more about your condition.

## TEAM MEMBER

# FRIENDS & FAMILY

*They're not medical providers, but a trusted friend or family member who understands your condition can provide much-needed support in managing your psoriasis.*

- Friends and family can be a great source of support when things are tough, so don't be afraid to lean on loved ones for emotional encouragement.
- Be open and honest with significant others. Sometimes, being upfront can help you build a stronger relationship.



“ I think anybody that has psoriasis should educate themselves and find a good dermatologist. Talk to them and find out what treatments are available.” - Mark, real psoriasis patient



## CHOOSING THE RIGHT TREATMENT PLAN FOR YOU

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With so many treatment options available, it's important to know what your choices are. See the next page for a breakdown of each so you can be prepared to discuss them with your dermatologist.

Looking for a doctor who specializes in treating psoriasis? Use our Dermatologist Locator to find one near you at [PSORIASIS.COM/FIND-A-DERM](https://www.psoriasis.com/find-a-derm)

## TYPES OF PSORIASIS TREATMENT



### TOPICALS

1. Often the first treatment prescribed by dermatologists
2. Can be applied to the affected skin as an ointment, gel, or cream
3. Can be used in combination with other treatments



### PHOTOTHERAPY

1. Slows the growth of affected skin cells
2. Uses special lights to emit UV rays directly on your skin
3. Can be used in combination with other treatments




### BIOLOGICS

1. Protein-based treatment administered by IV or injection
2. Targets specific parts of immune system to reduce inflammation
3. Usually reserved for people with moderate to severe psoriasis



### ORAL SYSTEMICS

1. Taken orally in liquid or pill form
2. Works throughout your body
3. Can be used in combination with other treatments



# **YOUR PSORIASIS STORY**



## **DOESN'T END HERE**



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Now that you know what's happening inside your body, and how it affects what's on the surface, use this information to navigate the conversation with your dermatologist.

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psoriasis**SPEAKS**



Visit us at [PSORIASIS.COM](https://www.psoriasis.com)  
for more helpful information