

DIET AND PSORIASIS

SUCCESS REPORTED A healthy anti-inflammatory diet is very important for patients with psoriasis. That's because patients with psoriasis have a higher risk of high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart disease. The good news is that the right eating patterns can help reduce those risks.

In terms of treating the skin findings of psoriasis, the dietary research is not as complete. There have been several studies showing that a diet and exercise program that leads to weight loss in those who are overweight has resulted in improved response to certain psoriasis treatments. These programs have also led to improved skin symptoms, with an improved PASI score (Psoriasis Area and Severity Index) in some patients. More research is needed to see if anti-inflammatory eating patterns can improve the skin findings of psoriasis.

Diet and exercise programs leading to weight loss may improve psoriasis severity.

A summary report of five such programs in overweight psoriasis patients found that patients who lost weight on the programs experienced an overall improvement in psoriasis severity scores.

TRIGGERS In terms of triggers, the biggest lifestyle triggers are smoking and increased alcohol intake.

Gluten-containing foods may act as a trigger in some patients, but it's not a common trigger. For patients with GI symptoms (such as constipation/diarrhea/abdominal pain/ other symptoms), we recommend testing for celiac antibodies. Several studies have found that patients with psoriasis are at about double the risk for developing celiac disease. That's still not a high number, though, since celiac disease is so uncommon in most populations. Other patients with psoriasis don't have celiac disease, but do have certain gluten antibodies. Some of these patients have noticed improvement by avoiding gluten. Blood tests can identify these antibodies.

HELPERS The research suggests that for overweight psoriasis patients, diet and exercise programs leading to weight loss may help. However, we still need more research into whether a particular type of diet may help. In terms of supplements, we need more research, especially into fish oil and vitamin D. Curcumin, the active ingredient in the spice turmeric, also warrants more research.