

Overview

In genetically vulnerable people, partially digested protein fragments are acted upon by microbes to form toxins which leak from the gut and set up an inflammatory response. Much new evidence supports this gut/toxin mechanism and importantly gives psoriasis sufferers a series of logical and achievable treatment strategies.

1. Relax!

Stress can greatly impair immune function, and immune system problems often express themselves as a psoriasis flare up. Regular yoga, meditation or time to yourself can help your skin.

2. Eat in peace, take your time with meals

The partially digested proteins mechanism for psoriasis means that simply chewing your food more can help your skin, particularly with protein rich foods. Relaxing whilst eating allows the full digestive mechanism to take place. Better digestion means less psoriasis in many cases.

3. Minimise animal protein intake

You don't have to become a vegetarian, but the protein fragments that cause most problems are animal proteins (particularly pork). Eat less meat, chew it and savour it more.

4. Speed up the transit

The more time that protein fragments and their toxic breakdown products have to form in your gut the more harm they can cause. Speed up their passage through your system by eating lots of fruit, vegetables and other high fibre foods such as oats, whole grains, cereals, beans and nuts.

5. Don't feed the "bad" microbes in your gut - eat less sugar

Toxic metabolites of protein fragments and amino acids created by yeasts and bacteria include such horrible compounds as putrescine and cadaverine, the levels of which have been shown to be elevated in psoriasis sufferers. The causative microbes love sugars, so decreasing sweets, biscuits, sugary drinks, etc. help decrease their numbers. Note that seemingly healthy foods such as fruit juices, pasta, rice and potatoes can all release sugars quickly when consumed thus feeding the problem causing bugs. Try diluting fruit juice with some water, and adding more vegetables to your rice and pasta. Such dietary changes are great for weight loss too.

6. Help from Herbs

The herb smilax sarsaparilla binds with, and helps excrete microbe produced toxins. One early study with 92 psoriasis patients, showed complete clearance or significant improvement in eighty percent of patients treated with a liquid sarsaparilla compound. The herbs golden seal (*Hydrastis Canadensis*) and silymarin (*Silybum Marianum*) also have excellent gut detoxifying properties. Check with your local pharmacy or herbalist for formulations available.

7. Avoid alcohol

Not only does alcohol add to work required by the liver, it also increases the absorption of toxins from the gut. Alcohol is well known to worsen psoriasis.

8. Break the inflammation cycle with Fish oil/Flax seed oil

One of the body's major inflammatory pathways (the arachidonic acid pathway) starts with omega 6 fatty acids from animal fats. Many studies show the benefits of substituting or supplementing omega 3 fatty acids, from fish and flax seed oil in the diet. The resultant inflammatory pathways are far milder. In psoriasis affected skin levels of arachidonic acid are 250 times greater than they are in normal skin. Arachidonic acid is found only in animal products, particularly meats and dairy, so minimise these where possible.

9. Sunlight

Sunlight (UV light) is a great natural treatment for psoriasis. It generates vitamin D in the skin and slows the high skin cell production rate which is the hallmark of psoriasis. Excessive sunlight has recently been shown to rapidly deplete body stores of the vitamin folic acid, so consider a supplement if you spend time in the sun.



10. Anti-oxidants and other nutrients

Many aspects of the gut/toxin mechanism are improved or protected by anti-oxidants in the form of vitamin C, vitamin E and fresh fruits and vegetables. Digestion is improved and toxin formulation in the gut is reduced. Zinc and vitamin A levels are low in psoriasis patients. Vitamin A may be taken in the form of the natural carotenoids in such vegetables as carrots and pumpkin, since carotenoids have other health benefits beyond their vitamin A activity. Foods rich in zinc include cocoa, whole grain wheat and wheat bran, sardines, crab, oysters, nuts and lean meats. Levels of the selenium containing anti-oxidant enzyme glutathione peroxidase are low in psoriasis patients. See your health practitioner if required to discuss specific nutrient therapies such as zinc and selenium.

11. Fight Infection

Any infection, whether of the skin or elsewhere in the body, can activate the inflammatory system to greatly worsen psoriasis. Unfortunately, many psoriasis sufferers already have impaired immune systems and to make matters worse many standard psoriasis treatments contain steroids which suppress immune defences and tissue repair where they are applied. To help fight infection consider the preceding hints; they will also help your immune system. Be careful with long term steroid treatment and consider alternatives that are steroid free. If taking oral cortisone treatments long term, do not stop taking them abruptly. If you must use a cortisone (steroid) type cream long term, consider using an anti-fungal cream with it. Natural products such as **Psoria** do not inhibit immune function and have strong anti-microbial properties. If you suspect that an infection is triggering your psoriasis, consult your health practitioner – the infection may be easily treated. Another reason to eat less sugar – consuming 100gram (4 ounces) of any of the simple sugars (glucose, honey, sucrose, orange juice, etc.) can reduce the white cells' ability to kill microbes for over 5 hours. Getting 7 hours of sleep per night is also vital for your immune system.

12. Minimise the use of oral Non-steroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAID's)

These include aspirin, ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil, Nuprin), Celebrex, Vioxx, diclofenac (Voltaren), naproxen (Naprosyn) and piroxicam (Feldene). These compounds are well known for worsening psoriasis. They increase gut leakiness, allowing more toxic protein metabolites to enter the blood stream. They can also aggravate asthma and cause stomach ulcers.

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please visit our website at www.nutripharm.net or contact *Nutri-Pharm* direct
at:

PO Box 7313
Karingal Centre, Vic, 3199
Australia

Ph: +61 3 5983 8525
Fax: +61 3 9789 6404
Email: info@nutripharm.net

