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MARCH 2023

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SCAN ME

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THE LATEST ON

PSORIASIS

PSORIASIS AND HEART DISEASE

If you are living with psoriasis, you may need to pay extra attention to your heart health. In a study, researchers compared 446,449 people with autoimmune diseases, including more than 185,000 with psoriasis, to 2,102,830 people without these conditions. They found that those with psoriasis or other autoimmune problems were about 56% more likely to develop heart disease than those who don't have immune-based disorders. That's about the same as the risk increase that type 2 diabetes brings. Ask your doctor what else you can do to prevent heart disease.

SOURCE: *The Lancet*

30 to 50

Most common ages when psoriasis develops, but you can get it at any age.

SOURCE: National Psoriasis Foundation

7 in 10

Number of people on biologics who must combine it with a topical medication to reach their treatment goals.

SOURCE: National Psoriasis Foundation

GOODBYE, SKIN AND JOINT PROBLEMS

In psoriasis, inflammation affects the skin, but for about 1 in 3 people with the condition, it spreads to the joints and causes psoriatic arthritis. In a new study, researchers may have discovered a target for treatment, and possibly prevention, of both conditions: a gene called S100A9. Previous research has shown that blocking this gene only in skin cells actually increases inflammation. But new lab experiments suggest that deactivating the gene throughout the body could eliminate both skin and joint problems. The research is very early, but it might one day lead to a single targeted drug for both psoriatic diseases.

SOURCE: *Annals of Rheumatic Diseases*

THE EFFECTS OF THIRDHAND SMOKE

Researchers don't fully understand what causes psoriasis, but they believe both your genes and the world around you play a part. A new study finds that the far-reaching effects of cigarette smoke may be a factor. Substances from cigarette smoke can linger on indoor surfaces indefinitely after someone has smoked there. Researchers call this thirdhand smoke. This new study tested the blood and urine of 10 healthy nonsmokers after exposure to thirdhand smoke and found that the substances enter the blood and urine through the skin and elevate inflammation in a way that could trigger skin diseases including psoriasis.

SOURCE: *The Lancet eBioMedicine*



PETER DAZELEY/VIA GETTY IMAGES

STATS & FACTS

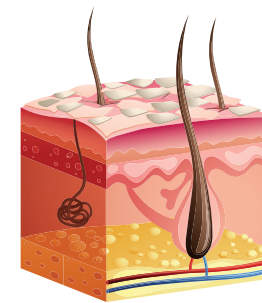
By Sonya Collins

Reviewed by Stephanie Gardner, MD, WebMD Medical Reviewer



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Read **Racial Disparities in Psoriasis Treatment:** use your mobile phone camera to activate the QR code



7.5 million+

Estimated number of people in the U.S. who have psoriasis.

1 in 7

Number of people with psoriasis who also have moderate-to-severe depression.

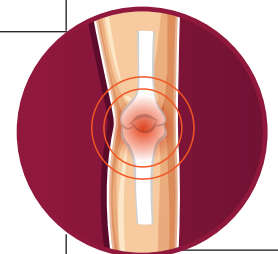


29.5 million

Estimated number of people living with psoriasis worldwide.

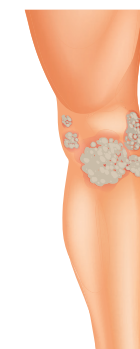
1 in 4

Number of people with psoriasis who also have psoriatic arthritis.



1 in 66

Number of African American people who have psoriasis.



1 in 28

Number of white people who have psoriasis.

1 in 2

Number of people with psoriasis who are dissatisfied with their treatment.

FREEPIK.COM/GETTY IMAGES

SOURCES: *JAMA Dermatology, BMJ, Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology, International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, Archives of Dermatological Research*



Skyrizi[®]
risankizumab-rzaa

I have moderate to severe plaque psoriasis

THE OPPORTUNITY FOR NOTHING ON MY SKIN MEANS EVERYTHING TO ME

**NOTHING IS
EVERYTHING**

KEEP YOUR SKIN CLEARER **WITH 4 DOSES A YEAR**
AFTER 2 STARTER DOSES

IN CLINICAL TRIALS, AT 4 MONTHS
3 OUT OF 4 PEOPLE ACHIEVED

90% CLEARER SKIN
WITH JUST 2 DOSES

OF THOSE, NEARLY 9 OUT OF 10
PEOPLE SUSTAINED IT

THROUGH 1 YEAR

NEARLY 4 OUT OF 10 ACHIEVED

100% CLEAR SKIN
AT 4 MONTHS

NEARLY 6 OUT OF 10 ACHIEVED IT
AT 1 YEAR

SKYRIZI USE

SKYRIZI 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).

Important Safety Information

What is the most important information I should know about SKYRIZI[®] (risankizumab-rzaa)?

SKYRIZI is a prescription medicine that may cause serious side effects, including:

Serious allergic reactions:

- Stop using SKYRIZI and get emergency medical help right away if you get any of the following symptoms of a serious allergic reaction:
 - fainting, dizziness, feeling lightheaded (low blood pressure)
 - swelling of your face, eyelids, lips, mouth, tongue, or throat
 - trouble breathing or throat tightness

- chest tightness
- skin rash, hives
- itching

Infections:

SKYRIZI may lower the ability of your immune system to fight infections and may increase your risk of infections. Your healthcare provider should check you for infections and tuberculosis (TB) before starting treatment with SKYRIZI and may treat you for TB before you begin treatment with SKYRIZI 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 and after treatment with SKYRIZI.

- Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have an infection or have symptoms of an infection, including:
 - fever, sweats, or chills
 - cough
 - shortness of breath
 - blood in your mucus (phlegm)
 - muscle aches

- warm, red, or painful skin or sores on your body different from your psoriasis
- weight loss
- diarrhea or stomach pain
- burning when you urinate or urinating more often than normal

Do not use SKYRIZI if you are allergic to risankizumab-rzaa or any of the ingredients in SKYRIZI.

Before using SKYRIZI, tell your healthcare provider about all of your medical conditions, including if you:

- have any of the conditions or symptoms listed in the section “What is the most important information I should know about SKYRIZI?”
- have an infection that does not go away or that keeps coming back.
- have TB or have been in close contact with someone with TB.
- have recently received or are scheduled to receive an immunization (vaccine).

**ASK YOUR DERMATOLOGIST ABOUT SKYRIZI
SEE MORE AT SKYRIZI.COM**

Medications that interact with the immune system may increase your risk of getting an infection after receiving live vaccines. You should avoid receiving live vaccines right before, during, or right after treatment with SKYRIZI. Tell your healthcare provider that you are taking SKYRIZI before receiving a vaccine.

- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if SKYRIZI can harm your unborn baby.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if SKYRIZI passes into your breast milk.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

What are the possible side effects of SKYRIZI?

SKYRIZI may cause serious side effects. See “What is the most important information I should know about SKYRIZI?”

The most common side effects of SKYRIZI include upper respiratory infections, feeling tired, fungal skin infections, headache, and injection site reactions.

These are not all the possible side effects of SKYRIZI. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

Use SKYRIZI exactly as your healthcare provider tells you to use it.

SKYRIZI is available in a 150 mg/mL prefilled syringe and pen.

Please see the following page for important product information for patients.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

If you are having difficulty paying for your medicine, AbbVie may be able to help. Visit AbbVie.com/myAbbVieAssist to learn more.

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BIOLOGIC BASICS

WHO THEY'RE FOR AND HOW THEY WORK

By Rachel Reiff Ellis

Reviewed by Stephanie Gardner, MD,
WebMD Medical Reviewer

Biologics are drugs that target specific parts of your immune system to reduce inflammation in your body. They're among the most recent developments in psoriasis treatment, and they're effective for many people with moderate to severe psoriasis.

"A biologic is a small molecule called a molecule antibody that blocks important parts of the immune system that are either overactive or key players in the development of psoriasis," says Lauren Kole, MD, assistant professor of dermatology at The University of Alabama at Birmingham.

WHEN AND HOW TO USE THEM

Your doctor may suggest biologics because your psoriasis covers much of your body or impacts your daily life. Sometimes biologics are right for initial treatment, and other times they're best to try once other options haven't worked.

"If a patient comes to me for the first time and they have widespread psoriasis, or they have psoriasis involving a debilitating area, or they have associated conditions such as psoriatic arthritis, we'll often jump other treatments and go straight to a biologic," Kole says.

You take a biologic as an injection or an IV infusion. You'll either go to a clinic to get them or give them to yourself at home. You can take biologics in combination with other treatments such as phototherapy or topicals.

POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS

Just like any drug, biologics come with some risks. Since they impact your immune system, you're at a higher chance of getting an infection when you take them, although Kole says these

risks have gone down as biologics have evolved.

"With older biologics, we worried more about a higher increased risk of infection or malignancy because they worked on broader parts of the immune system," she says. "But the newer biologics are very, very specific for the pathways of psoriasis, and so we're really just not seeing those increased risks for serious infections or complications like we used to."

Overall, biologics are fairly safe and tend to work for most people.

"As biologics have advanced over the years, they have become more and more effective," Kole says. "Before, we considered a 75% clearance of psoriasis a success. Now with biologics, we're looking at patients having 100% clearance, and we've come to expect that."

WHERE TO FIND OUT MORE

Lauren Kole, MD, lists resources for additional biologics information.

+ American Academy of Dermatology
[AAD.org](https://www.aad.org)

+ National Psoriasis Foundation
[Psoriasis.org](https://www.psoriasis.org)

+ American College of Rheumatology
[Rheumatology.org](https://www.rheumatology.org)

DAVID HERRAEZ STOCK PHOTOGRAPHY/500PX/VIA GETTY IMAGES

BOOST YOUR CONFIDENCE

TIPS TO HELP WHEN YOU HAVE MODERATE-TO-SEVERE PSORIASIS

By Kendall K. Morgan

Reviewed by Stephanie Gardner, MD,
WebMD Medical Reviewer

Psoriasis shows up primarily on your skin. But the effects can go much deeper. Your psoriasis may leave you feeling less comfortable in your own body or lacking confidence in social situations.

SEEK ALL-AROUND CARE

Tina Bhutani, MD, a dermatologist at the University of California San Francisco Health, says that she favors a well-rounded approach to psoriasis care. Find a doctor who will consider your mental health and overall wellness, not just your skin.

By treating mind and body, you might also see a positive difference in your skin.

CHECK YOUR MEDICATIONS

Having your psoriasis and skin symptoms well controlled is a confidence booster, too. New treatments now make this easier than ever before.

"With all the new treatment options and therapeutics we have for patients, we've gotten pretty good with treating the actual skin disease," Bhutani says.

If you think the medications you're taking aren't working well enough, ask if there's something else you could add or try instead. With psoriasis symptoms controlled, your health team will have more time to help you address other aspects of your health and well-being.

STAY MOTIVATED

Once skin symptoms are controlled, Bhutani says it's often a good time to think about what else you'd like to do to meet your

health goals, boost confidence, and perhaps even check off a few items on your bucket list.

"It's inspiring," Bhutani says. "Now that the skin is clear, [many of my patients think] what can I do next?"

BETTER YOUR HEALTH

Perhaps you want to reach a healthier weight or generally improve your health.

"Psoriasis is a systemic disease," Bhutani says. "[People with psoriasis] have more cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer. They are more prone to other health problems."

Steps to get healthy will improve your confidence today and help you feel better about the future, too.

CONNECT WITH OTHERS

A good first step, especially if you don't know where to start, is connecting with others in a similar spot, Bhutani says. She recommends the National Psoriasis Foundation and Twill Care. Online spaces or support groups are good places to "reset your expectations" and realize that you're not alone.

TINA BHUTANI, MD, SHARES MORE TIPS TO HELP ELEVATE YOUR CONFIDENCE:

- + Connect socially
- + Eat healthier
- + Move more
- + Practice mindfulness
- + Breathe deeply
- + Sleep well
- + Try therapy

When in doubt, have a conversation with your doctor, especially if you haven't seen them lately, she says. Options to treat psoriasis have grown. Make sure you aren't missing out.

"A lot of feelings may come from feeling alone, as if you are the only one experiencing this," Bhutani says. "It can help to realize others are out there with the same thoughts and feelings."



TREATMENT TRIUMPH

MY EXPERIENCE WITH BIOLOGICS

By Howard Chang

Reviewed by Stephanie Gardner, MD, WebMD Medical Reviewer



My skin became a major concern when I was only 8 years old. My parents are immigrants, and in their youth, they didn't see a doctor at the first sign of symptoms like this. It wasn't part of their culture, and they didn't always have access to health care. So when I developed a rash, they thought it would just go away on its own. After it didn't, they took me to the doctor, who referred us to a local dermatologist. That's where I got my psoriasis diagnosis.

TREATMENT TRIALS

It was challenging to handle psoriasis treatment before systemic medications, especially as a kid and teen. Back then,

treatments were quite messy and smelly and strange to me—things like coal tar and phototherapy. I also applied topical steroids and moisturizers, and my parents also had me try Chinese herbal medications.

Then in my 20s, my dermatologist prescribed a systemic medication for the first time. At this point, I was covered with psoriasis, especially my scalp. I started on pills, and they worked fairly well, but they gave me a number of side effects. For one, I had to do biopsies to check on my liver. Another affected my blood pressure and vision.

So in 2003, when biologics became available, I was eager to try them.

MOVING TOWARD BETTER

It had been 25 years of psoriasis symptoms without much relief, and I was hoping for something more effective with fewer side effects. When I read about biologics, they sounded too good to be true. They target the immune system and use a different mechanism to treat psoriasis, with potentially fewer unpleasant side effects.

The first biologic I tried—one of the first to come out—wasn't very successful. Not many people did well with it, and I had to go to an infusion center to get it. TNF inhibitors were the next in line. Those also didn't work well for me.

I'm on my sixth biologic now. I haven't had a break from them in the last 20 years.

ZERBOR/VIA GETTY IMAGES

INSET PHOTOGRAPHY BY LYDIA CHANG

But they've gotten better over the years. They've become more effective, and I worry less about side effects. Some of them work in combination with other treatments, so I've continued with other medications and sometimes phototherapy while on them. But that allows me to take those treatments in smaller doses and sometimes wean off them.

LEARNING TO SELF-INJECT

Some people really struggle with the need to self-inject biologic medications. That can be a barrier that is hard to overcome. Many clinics will have training available from health care professionals to help you learn tips and tricks. My dermatologist walked me through it. It

wasn't easy, but I got the hang of it.

You have to weigh what's best for you. There are risks involved with any medication, but along with those risks, it's important to consider the cost of not treating your psoriasis. It can affect your mental health and daily functioning. It can also increase inflammation in your body, which over time impacts other areas of your health such as increased risk of cardiovascular disease or diabetes. So it's not just your skin that feels the effects.

I've been able to do much more because of better psoriasis control. I went back to school. I got another degree. I really started doing more writing and advocacy because my psoriasis was doing better, and that's made all the difference.



HOWARD'S TIPS

- + **Do your homework.** Understand your options so you can choose what's best for you.
- + **Learn the risks.** Ask your doctor as many questions as you need to.
- + **Have hope.** Treatments have come a long way already and will continue to evolve.



SCAN ME

Read **Your Psoriasis Questions Answered:** use your mobile phone camera to activate the QR code

HOW MUCH DO YOU REALLY KNOW ABOUT PSORIASIS?

TAKE THIS TEST TO FIND OUT

By Kendall K. Morgan

Reviewed by Stephanie Gardner, MD, WebMD Medical Reviewer

1. Psoriasis isn't really a skin disease.
☐ True ☐ False
2. A day at the spa will help with your psoriasis.
☐ True ☐ False
3. New treatments for moderate-to-severe psoriasis work by boosting your immune system.
☐ True ☐ False
4. You shouldn't take biologics with your other psoriasis medicines.
☐ True ☐ False
5. Following a special diet is a good way to manage your psoriasis.
☐ True ☐ False



your immune system to calm down. You'll have many biologics to choose from. Ask your doctor if it's time to try a biologic and which one they'd recommend for you.

4. FALSE. It will depend on which biologic you're taking and, of course, you should always follow your doctor's advice. But biologics are often safe to use with phototherapy or topical treatments. You can take some biologics along with older medicines used for psoriasis, too.

5. FALSE. You may want to control your psoriasis by changing what you eat. Many people with psoriasis do. It's possible that eating fewer calories, taking fish oil or zinc, or avoiding gluten might help your psoriasis some. It's always a good idea for anyone to eat healthy. But there is no "psoriasis diet" and, by itself, changing your diet isn't likely to improve your psoriasis much.

1. TRUE. Psoriasis shows up on your skin, but it's really a disease of your immune system. It can come with inflammation and symptoms in many parts of your body, including your joints, eyelids, lips, and nails. It also increases your risk for other health problems, including heart disease, obesity, depression, anxiety, inflammatory bowel disease, kidney disease, and more.

2. TRUE. Lots of things can trigger your psoriasis to flare. What makes this happen for you might differ from someone else with psoriasis, but stress is a common trigger. So take it easy. Treat yourself to a spa day. If that's not your thing, find other ways to cope with everyday stress and relax.

3. FALSE. The trouble when you have moderate-to-severe psoriasis is that your immune system is working too hard. New treatments, called biologics, help by telling specific parts of

SOURCES: National Psoriasis Foundation, American Academy of Dermatology Association, *Dermatology Online Journal*