

Psoriasis, The Power of Natural Solutions

An interesting irony is that though Psoriasis may perhaps be the oldest known medical condition; it is one of the conditions whose mechanisms we know very little about. Even though many would argue that modern science has discovered many intricacies regarding psoriasis and many different medications have been developed, there are serious risks associated with these medications and safer, gentler, and equally effective sources of relief are needed for the suffering psoriasis population.

Psoriasis, for those who are unfamiliar, is an umbrella name for a chronic and recurring skin condition that manifests in various forms, though primarily as silvery scaly patches of skin, typically on the elbow and knees, but can occur anywhere on the body.

In ancient times, psoriasis was sometimes confused with leprosy, and at times could appear identical to the eye, but the primary difference was that leprosy is typically not painful and there is little to no sensation in the affected skin patches, whereas psoriasis is nearly always accompanied by varying degrees of itchiness. The name Psoriasis actually comes from the Greek word "to itch".

Psoriasis can manifest in different places and appear differently, but typically psoriasis is divided into two categories: pustular and non-pustular. The greater majority of psoriasis sufferers are afflicted with non-pustular psoriasis. The minority sufferers of pustular psoriasis develop either localized or widespread pustules that are surrounded by red tender skin.

Because psoriasis has quite likely been around for longer than the recording of human history, the number of "cures" for it is endless. One of the most shocking treatments was used in ancient Egypt, where they rubbed cat feces onto the lesions. Whether this was effective or

not is something, I imagine, few people are eager to experiment.

Another ancient remedy was the application of arsenic compounds onto the skin. The presumption that such a potent poison would return the skin to a healthy state is considered laughable today.

According to official medical texts, both the true cause, and cure, of psoriasis is unknown. There are two schools of thought, however, on the causes of psoriasis. The first camp considers it to be an overreaction by the skin to mild abrasions and environmental traumas and over produces skin cells as well as produces local inflammation in the dermis and epidermis. The second camp, which has more support and in which the pharmaceutical companies base their drugs on, believes that the symptoms are caused by T-cells. These are the immune cells that target and eliminate foreign invaders. These T-cells enter the lower skin layers and trigger specific signaling molecules called *cytokines* that trigger the production of inflammation.

Though there are a large variety of medications that are used to treat psoriasis, primarily for severe cases where more than 10% of the person's skin is affected, the mechanisms by which they function are relatively similar. They target these T-cells in the immune system and suppress their activity and thereby inhibit them from causing the inflammatory responses and preventing outbreaks.

While this process may reduce the incidences of outbreaks, suppressing the immune system has obvious risks involved. A prime example is Efalizumab. It is an antibody that blocks certain molecules from interacting with T-cells and thereby limits the rate that T-cells will interfere in a region of the body. This, however, had the unexpected effect of reducing the body's ability to neutralize normally harmless viruses, which in a number of instances resulted in fatal brain infections.

Because of this, the manufacturers of Efalizumab voluntarily removed the medication from the market in order to pre-empt an inevitable ban, lawsuits, and damage to the credibility of the company.

Though the story of Efalizumab may seem like an isolated case, the truth is that while preliminary testing of these medications may demonstrate low rates of acute side effects which are considered tolerable in order to reduce psoriasis symptoms and outbreaks, the long term effects upon the immune system are rarely discovered until individuals begin to fall ill. It is no secret that people with psoriasis have an increased risk of developing certain cancers, namely skin cancer. But no one can say with certainty that the risk comes from the medical condition and *not* the immune suppressing medications.

There is an alternative approach to treating psoriasis without aggressive and potentially deadly medications. The alternative methods work off of the principle that the reason why psoriasis outbreaks are sporadic and vary immensely in intensity, type, and length is because of each person's unique genetics and environment. By blindly targeting the immune system, one runs the risk of missing that individual's specific triggers. The one homogenous factor between all cases of psoriasis is that inflammatory responses generate lesions. The alternative approach seeks to remove the causes of inflammation in order to reduce the incidence of outbreaks.

While this may not sound different from the conventional approach, there is a critical difference. The conventional assertion is that T-cells cause the inflammation, so if you target the "cause" of the inflammation, aren't you targeting the T-cells? The answer is no. There are dozens of factors that can activate the body's inflammation responses. In fact, it is entirely possible

that by inducing inflammation in the body alone can cause an outbreak.

Some information that supports this theory is that one of the secondary effects of severe psoriasis can be a condition known as psoriatic arthritis, where pain and stiffness occur in the joints. This condition is caused by the same pro-inflammatory conditions that create the epidermal psoriasis and relief of one condition is typically followed by relief in the other.

Pro-inflammatory substances can be many things. If you are allergic to certain foods like nuts, dairy, or certain grains, these can cause an inflammatory response. There are also certain foods that are pro-inflammatory for nearly every American person. Beef is a good example. Actually, it's not the beef itself, but a substance in beef called *arachidonic acid*. Any body builders reading this might object to that statement because arachidonic acid is sometimes used by body builders to improve peak muscle strength. However, arachidonic acid is not an essential fatty acid and the body produces all it needs from other sources. Individuals who have certain inflammatory conditions, like psoriasis, are more likely to produce inflammation from consuming arachidonic acid than individuals without such conditions.

Arachidonic acid is not just in beef, it is also found in peanut oil, and is a reason for individuals with psoriasis to avoid peanuts as well.

Other pro-inflammatory foods include:

- Oranges
- Sugar
- Alcohol
- Trans fats
- Dairy products
- Processed meats (pork)
- Refined grains, mainly wheat
- MSG

A good rule of thumb is to stick to fresh vegetables, and avoid fried foods. For protein sources, consider organic lentils, organic animal meats like lamb, bison, venison, and mutton (no beef). Interestingly, a property of oranges that differentiates it from other citrus fruits is that it is actually pro-inflammatory and is the reason why people with psoriasis should avoid them as part of the elimination diet.

Some nutrients that are anti-inflammatory and help reduce inflammation in the body from pre-existing sources are evening primrose oil, vitamin D, and fish oils. Evening Primrose Oil (EPO), in particular, is one of the most effective substances at relieving psoriasis. While many have presumed that topical application of EPO promotes relief from psoriasis by promoting the production of healthy skin oils, this is not how EPO helps reduce lesions. Skin dryness is actually less of a factor in lesion development than inflammation. Reducing inflammation both topically and internally is the most effective approach for psoriasis. EPO when taken both orally, and applied topically, exerts an anti-inflammatory influence on the body. Initially, large doses may be required, on the scale of 5,000 - 8,000mg per day. According to research done by Linus Pauling, this megadose typically becomes unnecessary after approximately three months of treatment and a lower dose becomes equally effective, perhaps because some internal body reservoir that had been depleted was restored.

Another technique for relieving psoriasis is to adjust the acid/alkaline balance of the body. There is a growing body of evidence that suggests that transferring the body into a state that has a higher pH (meaning less acidic) can have a number of beneficial and preventative effects. It is very difficult for viruses, and bacteria to exist and thrive in a non-acidic environment. While psoriasis is not a virus, empirical evidence has shown that restoring an alkaline pH to the body reduces inflammation,

improves lesion healing and reduces outbreaks.

One method for improving alkalinity is by taking baking soda baths. Baking soda is non-toxic and using it as an additive in warm baths can help improve pH chemistry of the skin.

Not everyone has severe psoriasis, and many have only small patches on rare occasions. While it is quite likely that these stem from a specific environmental trigger (poor diet, stress, skin abrasions, or a combination) there are some natural topical remedies that may not necessarily return the skin to its normal state, but can help soothe the intense itching and promote healing. Topical EPO, olive oil, and perhaps turmeric or cayenne pepper-based creams may be helpful for certain individuals.

At the center, we have a near 100% success rate in relieving psoriasis for people who diligently follow and complete our program. We design tailor-made diet and supplement programs that work and we can develop one just for you, or your loved one too.



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