



# Psoriasis and associated health conditions



# People with psoriasis may develop other health conditions.

Psoriasis is a lifelong condition that happens when your immune system is overactive. This causes inflammation that could affect other parts of your body beyond your skin, such as your heart, liver, intestines, and blood vessels. This can lead to other health conditions, including arthritis, diabetes, and heart disease.



## How does inflammation happen?

The body releases chemicals into our blood to protect us from infections, injury, or a stressful event. This causes more blood to flow and may result in redness, swelling, or pain. In psoriasis, the chemicals released cause your body to make too many skin cells too fast, creating build-up and scales.



Your treatment should include a plan to test for these and other conditions. **Talk with your healthcare provider to see what routine tests should be part of your regular care.**



## Be aware and take charge of your health.

If you know what symptoms to look for, you and your healthcare team can better manage other conditions that may be affecting your body. **Review the list of conditions on the next page. Then, talk to your healthcare provider about the warning signs and symptoms of different conditions.**



## Diabetes

People with psoriasis may be more likely to develop diabetes. **This is because inflammation can affect your body's ability to keep your blood sugar levels normal.** Ask your healthcare provider to check your blood sugar regularly. Be sure to tell your healthcare team if you have symptoms of diabetes, such as increased thirst, increased hunger, blurred vision, or fatigue.



## Heart disease

People with psoriasis are more likely to have a heart attack or stroke, even if they have no other symptoms. **This is because the inflammation that affects the skin in psoriasis could also affect the blood vessels in the body.** Talk to your healthcare provider about the symptoms of heart disease and a plan to routinely check your blood pressure and cholesterol. Also, ask about which heart-healthy foods and activities you should try.



## Obesity

People with psoriasis are more likely to be overweight. **Maintaining a healthy weight is very important for people with psoriasis. Being overweight may be linked to worse psoriasis.** Losing weight may improve your symptoms and help make your psoriasis easier to treat. Talk to your healthcare team about a plan to keep your weight at a healthy level.



## Other inflammatory diseases

Inflammation in the body can affect areas such as the joints or intestines. That is why people with psoriasis may also be affected by other conditions, such as arthritis or inflammatory bowel disease. **If you have joint pain, swollen fingers and toes, stomach pain, or diarrhea, be sure to tell your healthcare provider.**

# Tests your healthcare team might suggest

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Getting treated for psoriasis is a great first step because that may reduce your risk for other illnesses or conditions.



**Talk to your healthcare team about these health screenings.** They should be part of your regular care.

- Cholesterol testing
- Blood pressure check
- Blood sugar testing
- Weight
- Other routine screenings

# What you can start doing

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A healthy lifestyle can make a difference. It can increase your enjoyment of many activities. Plus, it may make your treatment more effective.



**Ask your healthcare team about more ways to take charge of your health.**

- Stay active with walking, biking, or other exercises.
- Eat a low-fat, heart-healthy diet.
- Stop smoking.
- Cut back on alcohol.
- Try yoga or meditation.
- Ask about therapy options to support your mental well-being.



Check out this additional resource for more information about psoriasis:

**National Psoriasis Foundation**

[psoriasis.org](https://psoriasis.org)