

Psoriasis: Understood

YOUR GUIDE TO PLAQUE PSORIASIS

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Disclaimer: Some photographs and models used in this booklet are for illustrative purposes only and are not psoriasis sufferers. This booklet has been independently developed and produced by Psoriasis Association Southland with an educational grant provided by AbbVie.

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Psoriasis Association Southland is the main support network for people in New Zealand affected by psoriasis and psoriasis-related conditions.

About Psoriasis Association Southland

Psoriasis Association Southland aims to:

- Educate sufferers, their families and the public about psoriasis and its treatments
- Support sufferers and their families
- Distribute new information and research results
- Establish regional support groups
- Encourage research into new treatments and potential cures.

To support these aims, Psoriasis Association Southland fundraises at the local level and maintains contact with government departments, health authorities, pharmaceutical companies and psoriasis support groups worldwide.

We welcome your involvement with Psoriasis Association Southland and encourage you to consider membership.

For more information, please visit www.psoriasis.org.nz

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Foreword from Patricia Officer Young

President, Psoriasis Association Southland

I have lived with Psoriasis for over 50 years and researched and trialled numerous treatment options with the invaluable support and guidance of my specialist. For years psoriasis controlled me. I made the decision early on to educate and inform myself to ensure I could control it. Although I have never been completely clear of Psoriasis, I live my life to the fullest and try not to let it restrict what I do.



I dedicate my time, working with others at Psoriasis Association Southland to educate and inform the team in their journey with Psoriasis. The Association offers a dedicated and responsive network of information and support to all New Zealanders with psoriasis, their families and friends. Wherever you are on your psoriasis journey, Psoriasis Association Southland is here to support you.

To mark the 35th anniversary of the inaugural meeting of Psoriasis Association Southland in October 1978, we are delighted to have partnered with AbbVie to develop a set of three easy-to-read booklets on plaque psoriasis. They are available from Psoriasis Association Southland and can be downloaded for free from the Psoriasis Association Southland website: www.psoriasis.org.nz.

This booklet, PSORIASIS UNDERSTOOD, is the first of the three booklets and offers introductory information on plaque psoriasis and explains what psoriasis is, its causes, symptoms and treatment options.

Living with psoriasis can be an isolating, confusing and debilitating experience. We invite you and your family and friends to review these resources. We trust they will clarify some of your questions and be a useful starting point for you in your journey with psoriasis.

We sincerely hope the information in this booklet will assist you to better understand psoriasis and the available treatment options and make informed decisions about your treatment. We encourage you to use this knowledge to take control of your psoriasis.

What is psoriasis?

Psoriasis is a common skin disorder, with as many as one in 50 adults in New Zealand living with the condition.^{1,2} It most frequently develops in young adults and continues throughout their life.

The most common form of psoriasis causes raised, inflamed, scaly, red skin lesions, known as plaques. It is non-contagious, so it cannot be caught from someone else.



How many psoriasis affect my skin?

What causes psoriasis?

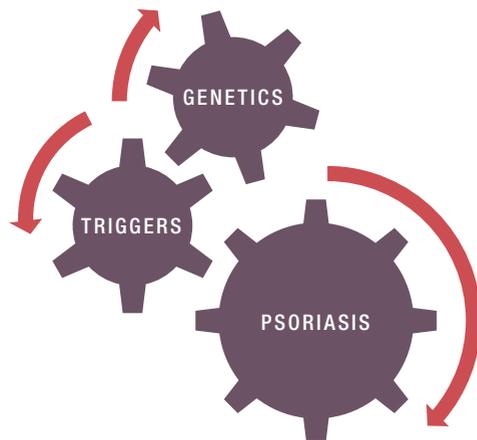
Psoriasis is an autoimmune disease – it is caused by overactivity of the immune system in the skin.

Immune cells accumulate and produce a range of chemicals, which act as if they are fighting infection or healing a wound. Skin cells multiply at an abnormally fast rate, forming psoriasis plaques.

Up to half of people with psoriasis have a family history of the condition, and inherited factors are known to be important.² However, even if a person is genetically predisposed to the condition, psoriasis may not appear. A trigger is required for it to develop.

These triggers or risk factors include:

- Smoking
- Alcohol consumption
- Infections
- Physical trauma
- Injury to the skin
- Certain medications
- Emotional stress



Plaque psoriasis lesions are usually:

- Dry
- Raised slightly above the skin
- Red
- Covered with silvery scales

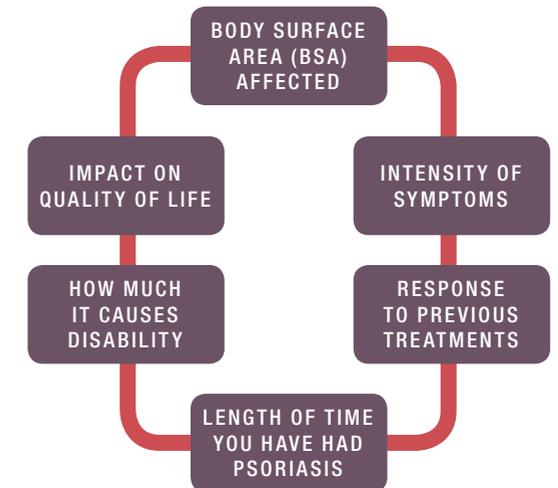
They may also be:

- Itchy
- Inflamed
- Painful
- Cracked
- Bleeding

There may be just a few lesions or there may be many. They can be found anywhere on the body.

Your healthcare professional will need to estimate the severity of your psoriasis in order to decide the most appropriate management strategy for you.

Classification of your psoriasis severity should take into account...



How may psoriasis affect my life?

According to a 2011 survey of New Zealanders with psoriasis:^{*3}

The impact of psoriasis is more than just skin deep.

Due to the long-term and visual nature of psoriasis, it can have profound social, psychological and economic consequences for your life.

It is critical that you are aware of these potential problems, to help you prepare for and tackle them.

Even if psoriasis only affects a small area of your body or if your symptoms have not been officially classified as severe, it can still have a strong negative impact on your quality of life.

In fact, the impact of psoriasis on quality of life is reported to be comparable with that observed in other conditions such as diabetes and depression.

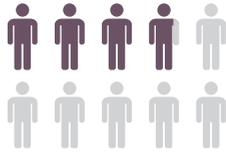
94%



EMBARASSMENT

Psoriasis causes embarrassment for almost all (94%) New Zealanders surveyed with psoriasis, with seven in 10 trying to hide it from other people, including their close family and friends.

38%



MISUNDERSTANDING

More than a third (38%) of the New Zealanders with psoriasis surveyed believed that their condition is not understood at all by the general public and the media.

19%



WORK DIFFICULTIES

Nearly one in every five New Zealanders surveyed with psoriasis in paid employment believe they have not sought a particular job or area of work due to their psoriasis.

20%



RELATED CONDITIONS

More than one in five New Zealanders surveyed with psoriasis also suffer from other medical conditions, including stress, depression, anxiety, joint pain, arthritis, high blood pressure and cholesterol.

^{*} From *Psoriasis Uncovered 2011 - a survey of 308 New Zealanders with psoriasis*³

Possible effect of psoriasis on your life:

EMOTIONS	RELATIONSHIPS	MENTAL HEALTH	DAILY LIFE	WORK
Self-consciousness	Difficulties relating to other people	Poor self-image	Avoidance of swimming, sunbathing, etc	Limit opportunities
Embarrassment	Misunderstandings surrounding your condition	Anxiety	Reluctance to leave home	Influence career choice
Anger	Inhibit sexual relationships	Depression	Sleep disturbance	Sick days
Frustration		Suicidal thoughts	Social isolation	
Helplessness				
Sadness				

The Psoriasis Area and Severity Index (PASI) score is a rating scale for measuring the physical severity of psoriasis that takes into account the area coverage and plaque appearance.

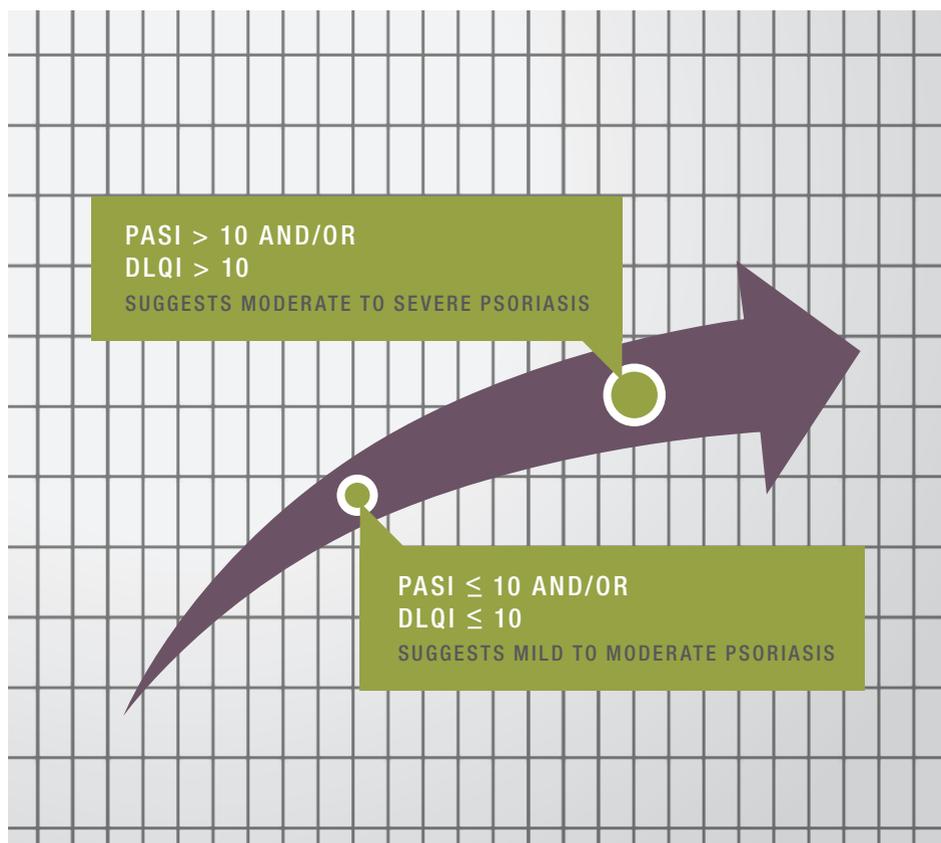
To calculate your PASI score, your healthcare professional will evaluate the level of redness, thickness and scaling of plaques appearing on your head, upper limbs, trunk and lower limbs. They will then assess the percentage area covered by plaques within each body region.

Be sure to ask your healthcare professional what your final PASI score is.

To help you cope with your psoriasis, talk to your healthcare professional regularly about how the condition is affecting your life physically, emotionally, socially and sexually.

Your healthcare professional may use a questionnaire, such as the Dermatology Life Quality Index (DLQI), to measure the impact of your psoriasis on your quality of life. You can download an example DLQI questionnaire from the Psoriasis Association Southland website

Your dermatologist should take both your PASI and DLQI scores into account when determining the severity and treatment of your psoriasis.⁴



What are my treatment options?

There are now a number of effective treatments available for psoriasis.

Doctors often take a 1-2-3 approach with managing psoriasis, as treatments that work well at first may lose their effectiveness over time.

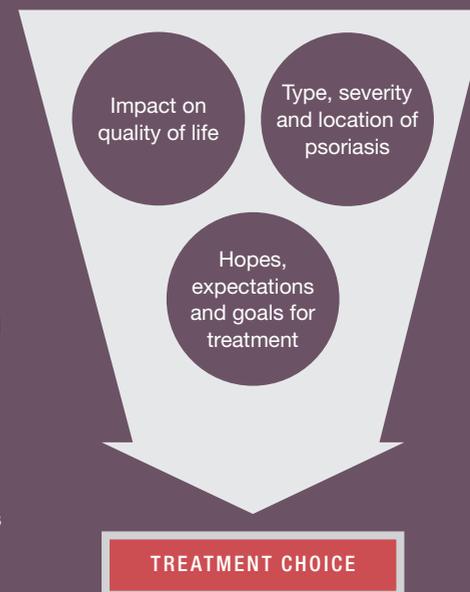


To read about some of these treatment options in more detail, refer to the PSORIASIS CONTROLLED booklet.

When considering choice of treatment, your doctor should consider the type, severity and location of your psoriasis, as well as the impact of both the disease and the treatment on your quality of life. They should also look at your perceptions of your disease and consider your hopes, expectations and goals for your treatment.

TIP: Identify your treatment goals and discuss with your doctor, for example:

- Achieve a PASI score of <10
- Feel comfortable wearing short sleeves
- Reduce number of work sick days due to psoriasis flare-ups.



Don't let your psoriasis control you: Seek effective treatment and connect with others

Dianne, aged 56, Invercargill

Having lived with psoriasis for nearly 10 years, Dianne has learnt to cope with her condition:

“I don't let it rule me – the best thing anyone with psoriasis can do is to get it sorted, so that you can get on with your life.”

When she first learnt she had psoriasis aged 47, she knew very little about the disorder and used to cover up in her job within the public health system, as she didn't want anyone to know about it. “I was given a hard time by my co-workers as well as by patients. I was made to feel dirty and felt like an outsider in the community and the work force. When I explained to people what I had, they had very little or no

understanding and I was frequently told to 'get it seen to', as it looked 'horrible'.”

After a specialist rheumatologist diagnosed Dianne with psoriatic arthritis in addition to psoriasis, she researched both disorders online and found some very helpful and supportive information. “Sometimes it made my head spin and some sites claim to have cures, which is not true, but I was very fortunate to find Psoriasis Association Southland. I also have great doctors and very supportive friends and family, especially my husband.”

Dianne has tried many treatments, both pharmaceutical and natural products, with very little success. However, since March 2012, she has been prescribed injections by her specialist, which have improved not only her psoriasis, but also her arthritis. “I have been given

I have been given a new lease of life and I am eternally grateful to my specialist for the tireless care that she has given me.

**DIANNE, 56, PSORIASIS SUFFERER,
INVERCARGILL**



a new lease of life and I am eternally grateful to my specialist for the tireless care that she has given me.”

Through connecting with Psoriasis Association Southland, Dianne was selected to have a makeover done in Auckland, as part of the New Zealand Psoriasis Uncovered campaign in 2011. “It was such a privilege to represent psoriasis sufferers from the South Island and I felt very humbled to be chosen.

There are so many positives from my experiences with Psoriasis Association Southland, but perhaps the best thing to come out of it is being able to speak with others who are in the same boat as I am – it's awesome!

I now never cover up, as everyone has some challenge in their life that they have to overcome. My motto is to treat other people the way I would like to be treated.”



Your relationship with your GP and dermatologist should be an ongoing partnership. They are best placed to help you choose the right treatment strategy for you, so good communication is key to achieving your goals.

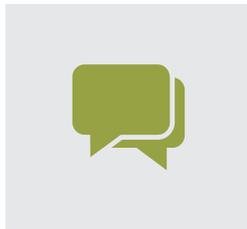
How can my healthcare professional help me?

The following tips should help you make the most of your doctor's visits and to learn as much as you can during your limited time with them:



KEEP A DIARY

Keep a diary that tracks how your psoriasis is affecting you, your treatment goals and effectiveness of treatment. Bring this diary to the visit so that you can refer to it as needed.



TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR

Do not be embarrassed about asking questions! It's their job to answer them. And it's ok to say, 'I don't understand'. Ask them to explain more clearly.



BE PREPARED

Make a list of questions to discuss with your doctor and bring it along to the visit. See the next page for some examples of questions you may like to ask.

Useful questions to ask your GP or dermatologist:

- 1 What lifestyle habits may be affecting my psoriasis?
- 2 What are the different treatment options available and what are the benefits and side effects of each?
- 3 Why have you chosen this particular treatment for me?
- 4 Can I use other medications while I am taking this treatment?
- 5 How long will it take to see results?
- 6 How will you monitor my progress on this treatment?
- 7 What will happen if I stop using this treatment?
- 8 What resources are available to help me to learn about psoriasis?
- 9 What can I do to help me cope with the psychological consequences of my psoriasis?
- 10 What can I do to help me be more comfortable with intimacy in a my relationship?
- 11 When will my next visit be and what can I expect?



In addition to this booklet, there are two further easy-to-read, information booklets that can be downloaded for free from the Psoriasis Association Southland website:
www.psoriasis.org.nz



2 PSORIASIS CONTROLLED

A guide to biological treatments for plaque psoriasis



3 PSORIASIS: MORE THAN A SKIN THING

Information, tips and facts about living with psoriasis and associated conditions in New Zealand



Psoriasis Skin Diary

Psoriasis Skin Diary is a mobile application (app) available for iPhone and iPad, designed specifically for Australians and New Zealanders with psoriasis.

The Psoriasis Skin Diary app provides a user friendly way for people to record how their skin is behaving and also better manage their psoriasis through a range of tools and personalisation features.

This app can help you track your symptoms so you can have a better conversation with your doctor. Tools include a Skin Diary with photo library and Skin Checklist. In addition, there are several personalisation features, such as appointment reminders, a personal profile form, password protection and a resource section.

You can download the Psoriasis Skin Diary app from iTunes for free. This app was developed by AbbVie in partnership with Psoriasis Australia and the Skin and Cancer Foundation of Victoria.

References

1. **Oakley A.** Best Practice Advocacy Centre New Zealand (bpacnz). The treatment of psoriasis in primary care. Best Practice Journal (BPJ). Issue 23. September 2009. Available at: <http://www.bpac.org.nz/magazine/2009/september/psoriasis.asp#specialist>. Accessed May 2013.
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4. **Baker C, Mack A, Cooper A, Fischer G, Shumack S, Sidhu S, Soyer P, Wu J, Chan J, Nash P, Rawlin M, Radulski B, Foley P.** 2013. Treatment goals for moderate to severe psoriasis: An Australian consensus. Australas J Dermatol. doi:10.1111/ajd.12014. [Epub ahead of print].

About AbbVie

AbbVie is a global, research-based biopharmaceutical company formed in 2013 following separation from Abbott. AbbVie combines the focus and passion of a leading-edge biotech with the expertise and capabilities of a long-established pharmaceutical leader to develop and market advanced therapies that address some of the world's most complex and serious diseases. For further information on the company and its people, portfolio and commitments, please visit www.abbvie.co.nz

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About Psoriasis Uncovered New Zealand 2011*

Psoriasis Uncovered was a joint initiative between Psoriasis Association Southland and AbbVie to assess the impact of living with psoriasis in New Zealand. Its aim was to understand and document the needs of people with psoriasis and improve awareness and understanding of one of the most common skin conditions in the world. The Psoriasis Uncovered survey was based on a sample size of 308 participants who completed an anonymous questionnaire either on paper or online over an eight-week period (31st October 2011 – 16th December 2011). People living with psoriasis in New Zealand were invited to participate in the survey via information available in dermatology clinics, the Southland Psoriasis Association, a link on the DermNet website, and advertisements in metro newspapers.

Psoriasis Association Southland is grateful to Psoriasis Australia, who developed the original version of this booklet, for their agreement to tailor, reproduce and distribute this material in New Zealand.