

# PSORIASIS: DOES IT RUN IN THE FAMILY?



Exploring your family health history with the National Psoriasis Foundation *Does it Run in the Family* toolkit

# Parents

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- Psoriasis has a genetic component. In family studies, it has been found that:
  - ▣ If a person has **no parents** with psoriasis they have a **2%-4% risk** of developing psoriasis over their lifetime
  - ▣ If a person has **one parent** with psoriasis they have a **14%-28% risk** which is 5-14 times greater than the risk of the general public
  - ▣ If a person has **two parents** with psoriasis they have a **41%-78% risk** which is 20- 40 times greater than the risk of the general public

# Siblings



- In studies of siblings, it has been found that if a person has **a brother or sister** with psoriasis **and**:
  - **No parents** with psoriasis, they have a **6%-24% risk**, which is 2-12 times the risk of the general public
  - **One parent** with psoriasis, they have a **31%-51% risk**, which is 15-25 times the risk of the general public
  - **Two parents** with psoriasis they have an **83% risk**, which is 33 times the risk of the general public

# Twins



- In studies of twins it has been found that:
  - In **identical twins**, when one has psoriasis, the other also has psoriasis **70%-80%** of the time
  - In **fraternal twins**, when one has psoriasis, the other also has psoriasis **15%-20%** of the time

# What does that mean?



If psoriasis was completely determined by genetics, than in the identical twins, you would expect both to have psoriasis 100% of the time. Because that isn't the case, we know that there must be other factors at play.

# Environmental Triggers



- Factors that have been studied include environmental triggers such as:
  - Stress – mental and physical
  - Infections – strep infection
  - Trauma – injury to the skin
  - Medications – lithium, some anti-malarials, some beta-blockers
  - Weather – cold, dry weather

# Lifestyle Triggers



- Other factors that have been studied include lifestyle triggers such as:
  - Smoking
  - Obesity
  - Alcohol intake

# Smoking

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- According to a 1999 study, "We know that smoking affects the onset of psoriasis and its clinical appearance. **Smoking about doubles a person's risk of getting psoriasis; the risk increases with the number of cigarettes smoked per day, and is higher in women than men.** The risk for women who smoke more than 20 cigarettes per day is about 2.5 times greater than the rate of nonsmokers, and in men the risk is about 1.7 times greater than the rate of nonsmokers."
- According to a 2000 study, "**Fully 78 percent of people who had experienced remissions were nonsmokers, and only 22 percent were smokers.** But of those who never experienced a remission, 66 percent were smokers, and only 34 percent were nonsmokers."

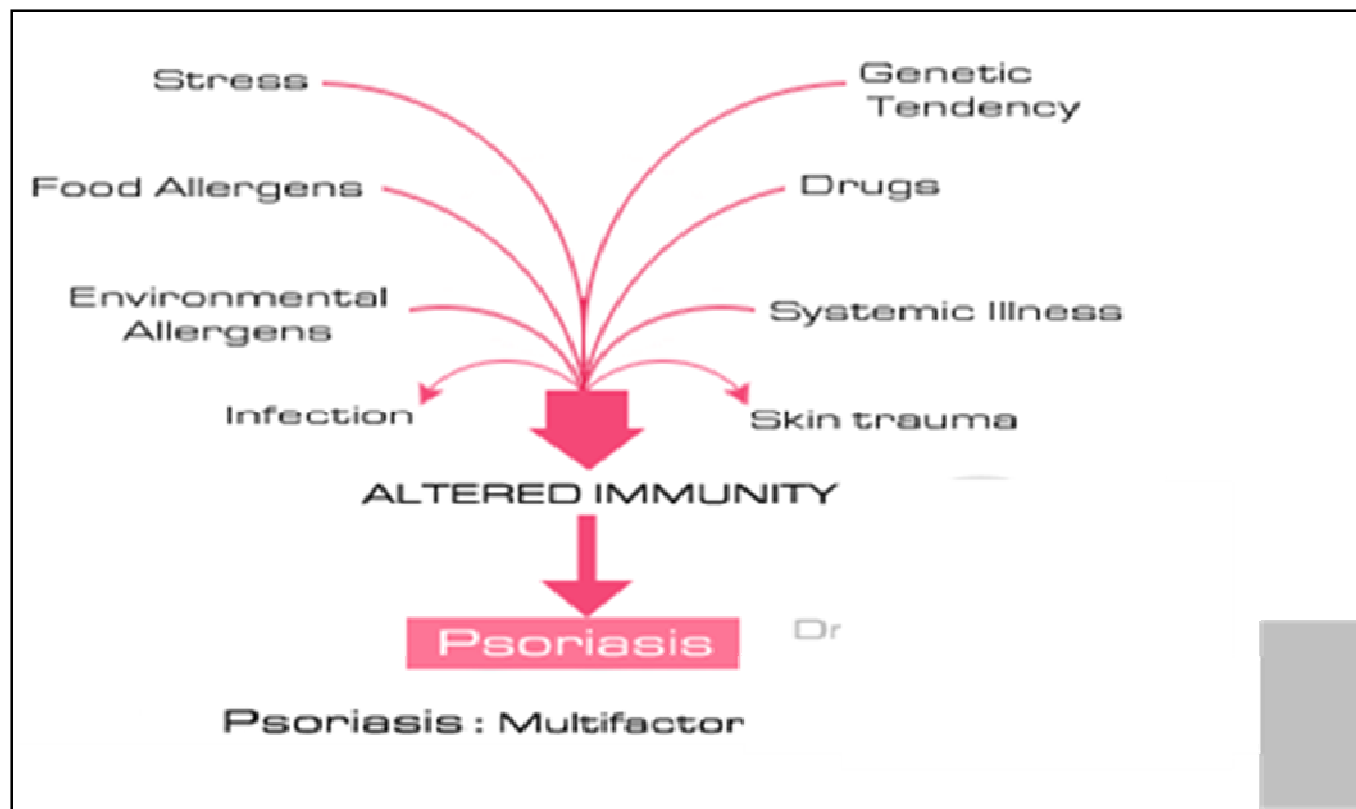
# Alcohol



- “Alcohol appears to affect psoriasis in men more strongly than in women. One study found that **heavy drinking actually lowered treatment response in men**. Other studies have shown that men with psoriasis drink more than men without, that there is a significantly higher incidence of psoriasis in alcoholics, and that abstinence can improve the severity of the disease.”

# Bottom line

- It's a combination of genetics, environment, and lifestyle that is the cause of psoriasis.



# What can I do?



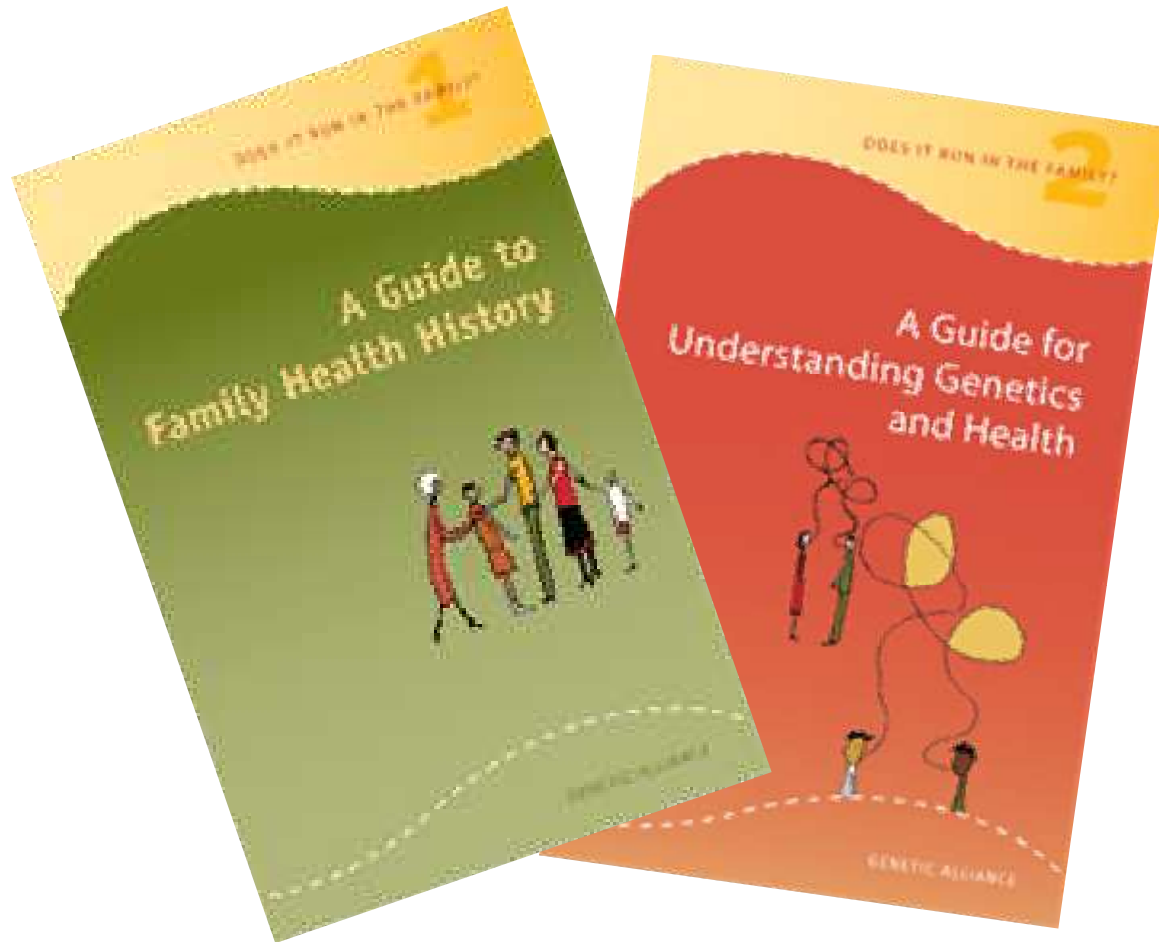
- Though you can't change your genetics, you can do the following things to decrease susceptibility to flares due to environmental and lifestyle factors:
  - Treat your psoriasis breakouts early and thoroughly
  - Maintain a healthy bodyweight
  - Eat a diet rich in fruits and vegetables
  - Eliminate smoking and alcohol
  - Keep skin moisturized
  - Moderate exposure to sunlight
  - Know your family history of lifestyle, environment, and disease

# Why family health history?



- Family health history is a collection of information about **diseases** that run in your family, as well as the **eating habits, activities,** and **environments** that your family shares.
- Knowing about diseases and habits in your family can help you make healthy choices.

# Where do I start?



# Using the toolkit



- Booklet 1 helps you **collect, organize,** and **understand** health information from your family members.
- Booklet 2 describes diseases that run in the family, including **psoriasis** and **psoriatic arthritis**.

# Additional toolkits



- Can be ordered by e-mailing [education@psoriasis.org](mailto:education@psoriasis.org) or by calling 800.723.9166