Being a flight attendant means long hours on your feet, daily contact with hundreds of strangers, and constant good cheer.

Psoriatic arthritis means aching joints, difficulty getting up in the morning, and constant fatigue. **Skin psoriasis brings itchiness, pain—and often, self-consciousness and embarrassment due to flaking and bleeding skin.**

It’s a tough combination. Yet somehow Abby Aloncher, an American Airlines flight attendant for 25 years and a psoriasis patient for 16, has been able to balance her job and her health with patience and humor.

Abby has lived with psoriatic disease for 16 years.

Abby has had to make a lot of changes to be able to keep doing the job she loves. "I have had to do three separate layers of ointments because, at flight altitudes, it is so dry, and I have to protect myself from being itchy and painful and bleeding through my white shirts. In the winter, it’s easier. I wear pants a lot, and long-sleeved shirts. When I do have [psoriasis] on my face or forehead, I cut my hair to have bangs.

Over the years, Abby has mostly treated her diseases with natural remedies, dietary choices and topical creams and ointments. She also uses phototherapy, a treatment for skin psoriasis in which the affected areas are briefly exposed to ultraviolet light.

When Abby relocated to Chicago from California, her psoriasis worsened. She began taking the drug Humira—one of a class of drugs for psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis that work by suppressing an overactive immune system response. Her arthritis symptoms have improved markedly, and she hopes her skin symptoms will also get better soon.

Abby has health insurance through American Airlines, and she also was able to enroll in a program that reduces the cost of each Humira shot to just $5 for the first year. **She isn’t sure how much her co-pays will increase at the end of the year.** For now, she’s hoping her new medication will work well enough for her to reduce the number of prescription creams and ointments she needs to use—and that her symptoms will continue to improve.