There is no clear answer if changing your diet or cutting out certain foods can improve your symptoms. The general goal in changing your diet is to get to and stay at a healthy weight. Weight loss has been found to improve the effectiveness of treatments, reduce the severity of psoriatic symptoms and improve your blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels. Long-term studies on the effects of dietary changes on psoriatic disease are still needed. However, researchers know that even a small weight loss can reduce disease severity and lower the risk of comorbidities (related health conditions).

We recommend speaking with your health care provider before starting a weight-loss plan, eliminating foods or adding supplements to your diet. You may also consider speaking with a registered dietitian or nutritionist to help create a dietary plan that fits your needs.

What are some dietary recommendations for psoriatic disease?

An anti-inflammatory diet may be helpful in reducing inflammation in the body. An anti-inflammatory diet focuses on avoiding foods that cause inflammation and including foods that help combat inflammation.

Foods to include:
- Fruits and vegetables
- Flaxseeds
- Olive oil
- Pumpkin seeds
- Walnuts
- Cold-water fish (like salmon, herring and sardines)

Foods to avoid:
- Fatty red meats
- Dairy products
- Processed foods
- Refined sugars
- Certain spices

How does diet affect my overall health?

There are many factors involved with how your diet affects your overall health. We all have different backgrounds, habits and medical histories. We respond to foods differently and at different times. And people with psoriatic disease can have clearances or remissions that have nothing to do with changes in diet or treatments.

These factors make it difficult to understand if any specific dietary change will affect your psoriatic symptoms. Adding or eliminating one food from your diet can help one person but can trigger a psoriatic flare for another.
Researchers are still studying the effectiveness of a gluten-free diet in treating psoriatic disease. A promising recent study showed that more than half of people with psoriasis who reduced dietary gluten noticed skin improvement. Removing gluten from your diet may help to reduce psoriatic symptoms. But this is most likely only if you are already intolerant or sensitive to gluten.

Gluten-free foods to include:
- Meat and poultry
- Fish and seafood
- Dairy
- Beans, legumes, nuts and soy
- Fruits and vegetables

Gluten-rich foods to avoid:
- Wheat
- Barley
- Rye
- Triticale (a cross of wheat and rye)
- Processed foods

Heart-healthy eating recommendations are important for people with psoriasis because they can reduce inflammation and improve heart health.

- Eat fish twice a week
- Choose lean meats and poultry over fatty red meats
- Eat high-fiber foods
- Use fat-free or low-fat products
- Limit trans-fats and processed foods
- Reduce salt/sodium intake
- Drink no alcohol or a limited amount (1 drink per day for women; 2 drinks per day for men)
- Follow recommended portion sizes

Probiotics have been shown to improve immune system function and blood pressure. You naturally have bacteria or microbes living inside and outside of your body (also called the microbiome). Probiotics contain live bacteria that replace or add to the good bacteria normally present in your gut. You can find probiotics in foods such as yogurt or kimchi and some supplements. The use of probiotics in treating psoriatic disease is still being studied.

An elimination diet identifies food sensitivities and allergies. It works by identifying specific foods that individuals may have trouble digesting, causing negative reactions like weight gain, abdominal pain, gas, bloating, fatigue, joint pain and increased psoriatic symptoms. The goal is to remove these trigger foods for 6 to 8 weeks. After that period, the trigger foods are then slowly added back into your diet one by one to help understand which foods interact with the body and how the body interacts with them. Some common inflammatory foods include gluten or grains, dairy, sugar, soy and corn.

Contact our Patient Navigation Center to find providers, prepare for appointments, discuss treatments and get help with accessing treatments (find contact information below).