Understanding psoriatic disease and nutrition

People with psoriatic disease report that they have reduced symptoms by changing what they eat or eliminating certain foods from their diet. Can this help you treat your own psoriasis or psoriatic arthritis?

There’s no clear answer. But even if dietary changes do not improve your symptoms, following a healthy diet can help you lose excess weight. This could improve your cholesterol and blood sugar levels, and that could lower your risks for related comorbidities.

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.
- 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 be a trigger for another.

As long as your overall health is not compromised, there’s no harm in exploring how diet affects your disease and how you may be able to reduce your symptoms through nutritional changes. We recommend that you speak with a health care provider before starting a weight-loss plan, eliminating foods or adding vitamins or minerals to your diet.

Weight loss and nutrition

Anti-inflammatory diets can help reduce psoriatic symptoms because psoriasis is an inflammatory disease. On these diets you avoid foods that cause inflammation and include foods that fight it. Though people on anti-inflammatory diets have reported improvements in their symptoms, your response could be different.

**Foods to include**
- Cold-water fish
- Flaxseeds
- Olive oil
- Pumpkin seeds
- Walnuts
- Fruits and vegetables

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

People have reported that gluten-free diets improve their psoriatic symptoms. But scientists have not found a link between gluten and psoriatic disease. Eliminating gluten from your diet may help reduce psoriasis symptoms, but this is most likely if you are already allergic or sensitive to gluten. If you think that you may be gluten-intolerant, talk with your health care provider.

**Foods to include**
- Meat and poultry
- Fish and seafood
- Dairy
- Beans, legumes, nuts, and soy
- Fruits and vegetables

**Foods to avoid**
- Wheat
- Barley
- Rye
- Tricale
- 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
- Eat high-fiber foods
- Use fat-free or low-fat products
- Limit trans-fats and processed foods
- Reduce salt
- Drink no alcohol or a limited amount
- Follow recommended portion sizes

Probiotics are the good bacteria found in the intestines and in some foods (such as yogurt and some supplements). Probiotics have been shown to improve immune system function and improve blood pressure. The use of probiotics in treating psoriatic disease is still being studied.

Weight loss has been found to improve the effectiveness of treatments and reduce the severity of symptoms. Higher body mass index is connected to increased risk of developing psoriasis, psoriatic arthritis and increased risk of developing psoriasis, psoriatic arthritis and more severe psoriatic symptoms. Long-term studies on the effects of nutritional changes on psoriasis are still needed. But we know that even a small weight loss can reduce disease severity and lower the risk of comorbid conditions.

What are elimination diets?

An elimination diet is based on the importance of gut health. Research has discovered that the majority of the immune system is located in the gut (the stomach and the intestines). Foods that you eat can either pass through your gut easily or cause an immune response. Psoriatic disease is an autoimmune disease characterized by inflammation. Avoiding foods that trigger an immune response can lessen disease symptoms, help weight loss and help prevent future health problems.

An elimination diet works by identifying trigger foods that might be causing an immune response. The goal is to remove these trigger foods for 6-8 weeks. This time period allows your body to cleanse and heal. After the 6-8 week period, the trigger foods are then slowly added back into your diet one by one. This helps to understand which foods interact with the body and how the body interacts with them. Negative food interactions can include weight gain, brain fog, gas, bloating, fatigue, joint pain and increased psoriatic symptoms. An elimination diet also helps to identify which foods have a healthy impact on the body. It is important to note that every person reacts to different foods differently.

For an autoimmune patient, the common inflammatory foods include:

- Gluten or grains
- Dairy
- Sugar
- Soy
- Corn

For more information

- American Heart Association: [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov/healthyweight](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight)