



Although the underlying cause of psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis stems from your body's immune system, the trigger factors that can make psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis worse, or cause flare-ups, include:

Cold and dry weather: Such weather can dry out your skin, which makes the chances of having a flare-up worse. In contrast, hot, sunny weather appears to help control the symptoms of psoriasis in most people.

Stress: Having psoriasis can itself cause stress and people often report that outbreaks of symptoms come during particularly stressful times.

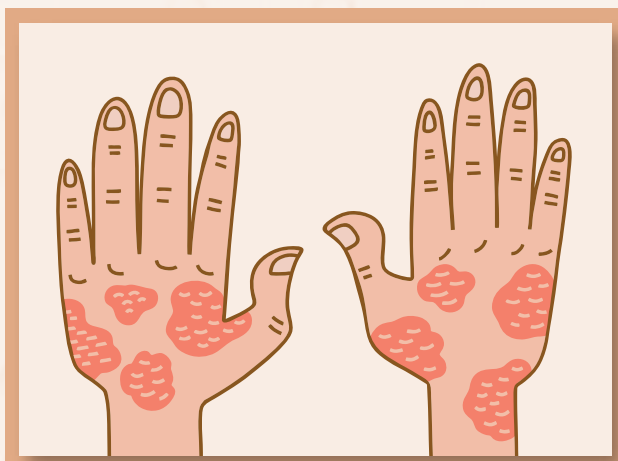
Some medications: Certain drugs, such as lithium (a common treatment for bipolar disorder), drugs for malaria, and some beta-blockers (used to treat high blood pressure, heart disease and problems with heart rhythm), can cause flare-ups of psoriasis. Some common painkillers – called nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) – may also aggravate psoriasis, although they are still used in some people with psoriatic arthritis. If you experience side-effects remember to report these via the Yellow Card Scheme (see page 9 for more details).

Infections or disease: Certain infections, such as streptococcal throat infection or tonsillitis, can result in guttate psoriasis or other types of psoriasis. Psoriasis may worsen in people who have HIV.

Trauma to the skin: In some people with psoriasis, trauma to the skin – including cuts, bruises, burns, bumps, vaccinations, tattoos and other skin conditions – can cause a flare-up of psoriasis symptoms either at the site of the injury or elsewhere. This condition is called Koebner's phenomenon.

Alcohol: Using alcohol may increase the chances of flare-ups, at least in men.

Smoking: Some experts think that smoking can worsen psoriasis, in particular palmoplantar pustulosis psoriasis.



How does this information affect the management of psoriasis?

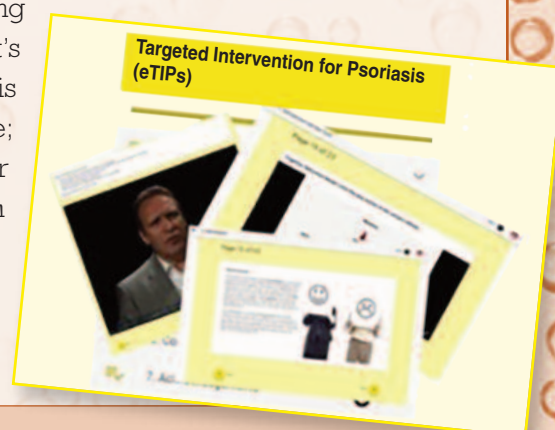
The bottom line is that the lack of precise information on the cause of psoriasis severely hampers the search for a cure. However, the current state of information has

resulted in the development of new effective treatments, all based on trying to correct the faults within the immune system.

It is hoped that more effective treatments will be developed as understanding of the complex problems within the immune system increases.

What can be done?

Avoiding triggers can be difficult. On a recent post on a social media site, many people agreed with these common triggers, but no single solution appeared to provide any answers to how to avoid a flare. Keeping generally healthy, restricting alcohol, stopping smoking and trying to cope with stress are usually helpful, albeit to varying degrees. That's why psoriasis is such a puzzle; what works for one person doesn't always suit another.



Our online cognitive behaviour programme (CBT), eTIPs, might be a useful start to understand the way you think and feel about your psoriasis. It's free to access and works on any compatible device. It's available at:
www.papaa.org/shop/e-tips-course