9 Things Only People with Psoriasis Understand

by LARA WYATT

Things Only People With Psoriasis Understand

Psoriasis can seem a very lonely, insular disease. You may not have come across anyone else who suffers, or you may have only known people in your family who just ‘get on with it.’

Whatever your circumstances, be sure to know that fellow sufferers out there understand exactly what you are going through.

We Understand Psoriasis Is Not Contagious

Probably the most common misconception surrounding most common skin diseases.

Psoriasis, in particular, can be misunderstood especially when it can be so visible to others. They may wrongly assume the spots and plaques are something else, something contagious. However, this is not the case.

Psoriasis is an autoimmune disease which is thought to be hereditary. What is contagious though, is spreading awareness and educating others about the nature of psoriasis. The better people understand the disease, the kinder and more understanding people will be to sufferers.

We Understand Scalp Psoriasis Is Not Dandruff

People may notice white flakes in their hair and assume it is dandruff and treat it accordingly with a dandruff shampoo.

Sufferers of scalp psoriasis will know to check their scalp more carefully as they spot flaky scales covering red patches of skin around the hairline. This is a sure-fire sign it is not dandruff, and it is scalp psoriasis which needs a different type of treatment altogether.

For example, olive oil or coconut oil are good ways to moisturize the flaking scales, and coal tar shampoo helps to minimize the psoriasis patches.

We Understand Psoriasis Means a Light Wardrobe

By that I mean, light in material and light in color. Flakes of skin have never been a trendy fashion accessory. The unsightly build-up of flakes on the shoulder area is only made more obvious if they fall on to dark clothing which highlights the white flakes against a dark background.

Wearing light colors don’t help to manage your psoriasis, but it does help to make it easier to disguise and give you more confidence to face the world. The light color is for aesthetic reasons; the light material is for a more practical reason as it allows your skin to breathe.

Cotton and natural fabrics are kindest to your skin especially when kept loose and not rubbing on affected areas. Light clothing can prove very difficult to wear in winter when all you want to do is wrap up; your best option is to opt for layers that can be removed to avoid you overheating.

We Understand Psoriasis Causes the Dreaded Itch

The itch can be relentless. You scratch without realizing. You scratch in your sleep. You scratch till you bleed. You scratch because it can feel like the only instant relief available.

Moisturising your skin is essential to keep the itch at bay, but during the day and at work, this can prove difficult to manage. You spend a lot of your day, drying off before you can get dressed and get on with your day.

This itch gives you a daily routine of *cream, dry and repeat* which can seem to add hours on to your day.

We Understand That Psoriasis Means Coming out the Shower Smelling of… Nothing

Hopefully clean, but no smell. Perfumed products become your arch enemy. A flare can be caused by simply using the wrong soap or shampoo.

Your sensitive skin needs to be nurtured, moisturized and kept clean but that means using products which have very few chemicals and probably no added fragrance. Same can be said for laundry products, be sure to look out for ones specially made for sensitive skin to avoid irritation.

We Understand That Psoriasis Can Be Costly

Prescriptions, new treatments, emollients, special diets, fragrance-free toiletries, special clothes, endless bed sheets and the list is endless.

When you are at your wit's end with your psoriasis, you will try anything, and I mean anything to alleviate the symptoms. It can be very much trial and error to find treatments and products that work for your skin and your lifestyle and this cost can all mount up.

Not to mention the clothes, towels and bed sheets that get ruined by treatments and need continually changing.

We Understand That Psoriasis Looks Different on Different People

“Oh my friend has psoriasis, it doesn’t look like that; that’s definitely not psoriasis.” Helpful yet untrained medical diagnosis can be a very common occurrence.

People think they know psoriasis, but they tend to know the most common type; plaque psoriasis. There are many types, which look different on different skin types and can also look different on different parts of the same body.

We Understand Psoriasis Is More Than a Skin Disease

People may see the flakes, spots and dry patches and assume that they are the only things sufferers have to contend with. What they rarely understand are all the underlying issues which come with dealing with such a complicated disease.

Most sufferers will have dealt with disrupted sleep at some point. This can lead to a daily struggle trying to juggle work and family life.

Another major issue which goes beyond the skin is your mental health. Depression and anxiety are common amongst sufferers. Your self-esteem takes a real beating when you have to contend with stares, comments or advice from people who don’t understand.

We Understand We Are Not Alone

People who haven't suffered from psoriasis will probably never fully understand what you're going through. All you can do is talk to others and share with your family and friends how you're feeling and all the different ways it can affect your life, not just your skin.

Social media and the internet can be wonderful places to find similar people suffering the same way you are. Forums can be a great place to confide in others and share your feelings with other sufferers.

You are not alone. Nearly three percent of the World's population suffer from psoriasis.

You may be the only one in your school or workplace but looking a little further afield there are plenty of fellow psoriasis warriors out there, facing each day with a new flare, a dreaded itch and a little hope that today there will be some relief.

Find other people who DO understand what you're going through, and it will make you feel better.