Improve Skin and Joints

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Tips to Improve Skin and Joint Problems

Many years after you had been diagnosed with psoriasis affecting the skin, you may notice signs of psoriatic arthritis. The typical symptoms included painful, warmer than normal, stiff joints (usually worse in the morning or after rest), swelling of the fingers (or toes). It is estimated that in 70% of cases, people manifest psoriatic arthritis about 10 years later after developing skin psoriasis. Along with medication, you can use some lifestyle changes to better manage the symptoms.

Tips That Improve Both Skin and Joint Flare-Ups

1. **Avoid Dry, Cold Weather**
   Weather can have a big effect on psoriasis; the skin lesions get worse, and the joints get more inflamed, too. Hot weather is better for most psoriasis sufferers. Take trips to warm places or avoid spending time outdoors in the winter.
   Get some sun but not too much: while your joints may become less inflamed, sunburn can aggravate the skin lesions. Be sure to have parasols or a shady area nearby so you can still enjoy the outdoors without direct exposure to the sun.
2. **Avoid Inflammation and Infections**
   Skin traumas can cause a flare-up of skin psoriasis at the site of injury, known as Koebner's phenomenon and infections can also aggravate skin lesions. The joints are sensitive to inflammations and infections and you may experience arthritic flare-ups as well. Pay attention to your diet (red meat and processed foods cause inflammation in the body, while some experience aggravation when eating dairy, foods that contain gluten or alcohol). Avoid injuries and infections (properly dress any wounds and avoid tattoos to prevent infections). If you have a surgery scheduled (including extensive dental procedure), talk to your doctor about the antibiotics you need to take to prevent infections.
3. **Stress Management**
   Stress makes all symptoms worse, whether the skin or the joints are affected. Try yoga, tai chi, breathing techniques and meditation to reduce the stress levels in your life. Exercise regularly (for example walk for a half an hour a day, or get an individualized workout from a physiotherapist). Although exercise may appear to be more important to keep your joints healthy and mobile, it can also relieve stress and anxiety (which are linked with skin flare-ups).

Some medication is indicated specifically for arthritis associated with psoriasis. For example, over the counter drugs such as ibuprofen or naproxen, or prescription drugs like gabapentin or anti-depressants. Some studies also suggest that acupuncture can provide effective pain relief.

Improve your workplace. If you have to spend lots of time in an office chair, ask your manager for ergonomic devices (chair, computer devices, headsets, etc.) that help decrease the strain on your joints. Improve your posture with stretching exercises. If your job involves lifting heavy weights, ask your doctor if you should get an alternate job or perform modified duties. If you are unable to work at all, you may be eligible for short or long term

disability benefits.