



Which Over-the-Counter Psoriasis Creams Are Best for You?

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Choosing an OTC Psoriasis Cream

When a psoriasis flare-up strikes it's easy to get overwhelmed with options for treatment. When a flare-up is really bad, going to the doctor may be your first choice. However, there are several over-the-counter (OTC) psoriasis cream treatments you can consider to help ease the pain and appearance of psoriasis flare-ups.

How Do They Work?

Each type of OTC treatment has a different responsibility. Depending on the type of flare-up and its severity, you'll want to find the right options for you. Some treatments will lock moisture in your skin, while others help with reducing the impact of plaque patches on the skin. Here are several different types of topical treatments you should be able to buy from a pharmacy near you.

Keratolytics

There are several types of keratolytics that are available over the counter. A keratolytic treatment is useful for lifting scales from the skin's surface to let other treatments get into the skin and treat the psoriasis flare-up itself.

Salicylic Acid

This type of treatment falls into the keratolytics family. It helps the skin shed its scales to encourage the skin to absorb medicated ointments to treat psoriasis. It is advised to only use salicylic acid on small patches of psoriasis to avoid the skin absorbing too much of the medication, which can result in negative side effects. There are different salicylic acid preparations you can try, including lotion, ointment, shampoo, soap, and gel.

Urea

Urea also falls into the keratolytics family and is helpful in removing the scale layer of psoriasis-affected skin. They're also great for keeping the skin moisturized and help ease skin irritation. Urea is already present in healthy skin, however, a manufactured form of urea can be purchased over the counter to help treat mild psoriasis flare-ups. You can get most urea preparations over the counter, and the emollient forms are available as a cream, shampoo, lotion, or gel.

Coal Tar

Coal tar has a long-running reputation as being a great option for easing the symptoms of psoriasis. It has that distinctive polarising smell that some people love and others loathe. It comes in many different forms, including a liquid to pour into your bath or apply directly to your skin, creams, and shampoos. What coal tar is great for is slowing the rapid growth of skin cells that psoriasis creates. It can also help reduce redness and ease pain and itch from inflammation. A great tip is to draw a warm bath and pour a cap of coal tar in. Soak in this for 15 minutes

or so.

Moisturizer

Using a moisturizer on your skin before, during, and after you have a psoriasis flare-up is essential. When your skin is kept hydrated it makes a flare-up less painful as skin dryness can cause painful cracking, and plaques will be far more frustrating. When your skin is hydrated, topical treatments can penetrate the skin easier and help alleviate the painful symptoms of psoriasis. The main thing to remember when choosing a moisturizer to help your psoriasis is to choose one that is alcohol-free and fragrant-free. Lotions that contain alcohol can actually dry out the skin rather than keep it hydrated and fragrances can cause irritation. There are several styles of moisturizers to consider — typically the greasier options are better for keeping skin hydrated, like shea butter. However, a non-greasy water-in-oil option, like fatty cream, is great for treating skin conditions. It traps water under its surface and keeps skin hydrated longer, preventing skin dryness which can help topical treatments penetrate the skin and treat psoriasis easier.

Aloe Vera

Aloe vera is a natural option that you can buy from pharmacies or beauty stores. It's the gel you're looking for, and you still apply it to your skin as you would topical ointment. According to ProHealth, aloe vera gel is great for helping to heal your skin if it's cracked and sore, keeping your skin hydrated, as well as reducing inflammation — all things psoriasis sufferers have to deal with.

Hydrocortisone

Depending on the severity of your psoriasis, you may need to visit your doctor to get a prescription for a higher dose of hydrocortisone. However, if you're after a mild hydrocortisone cream, this is something you can find at your pharmacy. A hydrocortisone cream that you can buy over the counter may reach up to 1%, and it's useful for small patches to reduce itch and inflammation. It's advised you don't apply hydrocortisone cream to your face and if symptoms persist after seven days, you should go and see your doctor.

Final Notes on OTC Psoriasis Cream

There are many different types of treatments for psoriasis available over the counter. Depending on the severity of your condition, trying a mixture of options may be a good way to be able to keep mild flare-ups from getting any worse. If symptoms do persist, remember to see your doctor.