Avoid Flare Ups on July 4th

by BRENDA VANTA

Leaving the Flares for the Fireworks on Independence Day

Can you go out and enjoy the fireworks on July 4th without psoriasis flare-ups? Sure you can and you should make some plans for this holiday. Just keep in mind to avoid some triggers and use a few more tips. And don't forget to bring some meds with you, too.

Uncomfortable Showing off Those Skin Lesions?

Many psoriasis sufferers don't feel good about exposing the affected skin while going out. This may not be easy in the summer when most people choose sleeveless shirts and short pants or skirts. Firstly, consider the fact that most people are aware of this condition, and they know is not contagious. Secondly, it may be a good idea to wear long pants or skirts, and tops with sleeves, as too much exposure of the skin to the sun is not beneficial anyway. Spending 20-30 minutes in the sun before 12 pm or after 3 pm is ok, but going to a barbecue and exposing your skin for hours can trigger a flare up.

The solution is simple: choose loose clothes made from natural ingredients – for example lightweight cotton. White or light-colored fabrics with various patterns are the best as they don't absorb as many sun rays, plus they can hide skin flakes better than darker colors. Avoid wool and synthetic fabrics as they can make both the skin more itchy and irritated. Use a hypoallergenic or a green laundry detergent to avoid other skin irritants.

What Should You Drink and Eat at the Party?

You will likely see the most popular North-American foods at the party: plenty of hamburgers, hot dogs, sausages, French fries, tons of cookies, ice cream, sugary and /or alcoholic drinks. All these foods may not cause a flare-up when consumed for a day, but if you eat them regularly they promote inflammation in your body, including your skin. The best thing to do is to stick with a healthy meal like fresh fruits and vegetables, grilled or baked chicken and fish. Dried fruits, nuts and seeds can be a great alternative to a dessert.

In addition to following a healthy diet based on vegetables, legumes, whole grains, nuts and seeds, lean meat and fish, watch for food allergies, they are commonly associated with psoriasis. Note: if you develop flare-ups after eating a specific food, eliminate that food for a few weeks. If you notice improvement, you may be allergic to that particular food. Also, have a gluten-free trial diet, and see if you notice improvement. Dairy products, fatty red meats, processed foods can also aggravate symptoms of psoriasis in some people.

Choose water or herbal teas with ice instead of colas or other beverages with sugar. Have a drink or two if you want but avoid excessive alcohol.

Other Considerations

Avoid stress and fatigue, as both can trigger a flare-up. Exercise daily to keep your immune system strong and

the skin toned and healthy. Use medicated creams and ointments to avoid cracked skin, inflammations and infections.