Vitamin D for Psoriasis

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Using Vitamin D for Psoriasis Treatment

A range of vitamins are important to maintain strength, balance and function, but research suggests that vitamin D plays a particularly important role in skin health, too. From better moisture retention to fewer troublesome plaques, you may be able to change the course of your symptoms with a bigger dose of vitamin D, as long as you take a safe and calculated approach.

The Science behind Vitamin D-Based Treatment

An influx of vitamin D seems to encourage the peptide cathelicidin to bond with DNA, and the result is a fairly drastic decrease in inflammation. Since patients with psoriasis suffer from an overactive inflammatory response, this chemical bond can have a profound effect on the scaly plaques, flaking and itch that characterize psoriasis flares.

The good news is that these findings on the role of cathelicidin could lead to a targeted medication that would help eradicate psoriasis flares. Unfortunately, that breakthrough may take some time, so in the meantime you'll need to work with vitamin D therapy in its current forms, and apply it in the most effective ways.

The Best Places to Get Your Vitamin D

There are plenty of places to get your daily dose of vitamin D, but in the long run, some are certainly better than others. You'll need to consider the severity of your psoriasis, along with how much time you can commit to clinical visits and expensive treatments. Luckily, you may be able to combine some of these approaches for a safe yet very effective upgrade to your psoriasis treatment plan:

- **UVB therapy –** Phototherapy is a painless but effective procedure to deliver vitamin D and healing ultraviolet light right into the skin, typically carried out over several weeks. UVB therapy can concentrate the helpful rays where you need it most, on uncomfortable plaques. Narrow-band UVB therapy is even more focused, which can mean fewer treatment sessions, and in some cases, patients may use a phototherapy lamp at home for more frequent treatments.
- **Natural sunlight –** The sun is a good source of vitamin D, but its negative effects on skin are well-documented. Premature aging, increased risk of melanoma, and irritation are notable risks, although small doses of natural rays can be helpful. Most experts recommend no more than 10 minutes of direct sunlight at a time, and you'll still need to wear sunscreen and sunglasses to avoid dangerous burns and permanent damage.
- **Vitamin creams –** Therapeutic vitamin D cream can control cathelicidin production, limiting the inflammatory reactions with DNA that feed psoriasis. It works best for mild to moderate psoriasis, with 50% to 60% of patients noticing an improvement in symptoms. Ask your doctor about a prescription for Dovonex, which you can apply to your psoriasis plaques each day.
- **Food sources –** Egg yolks, milk and fatty fish are great sources of vitamin D, but there are non-animal

sources, as well. Mushrooms – especially the Portobello variety – deliver a big portion of your daily value, while soy products and fortified beverages can fill in the dietary gaps. Look for orange juice with added vitamin D, as well as fortified whole grain cereals to start your day with a helpful vitamin boost.

It can be difficult to find the right approach to ease your psoriasis, and while vitamin D isn’t a cure, it definitely deserves a place in your treatment plan. Talk to your doctor about the best way to increase your vitamin D without risking further discomfort, and be sure to discuss how your other medications could interact with an increase in vitamin D.