How to Take Care of Your Psoriasis in the Winter

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Winter Psoriasis Skincare

If you have psoriasis, you likely experience a worsening of symptoms during the cold winter months. Let's take a look at why this is so and examine some effective strategies to reduce the likelihood of this occurrence. If you are already having a flare-up, we will explore ways you can promote comfort and healing of the lesions.

Dry Air is a Common Problem for Winter Psoriasis

Skin dries out easily in winter due to cold, dry air and wind. Indoor heat may also cause your skin to dehydrate — forced hot air, coal and wood heat are particularly drying. Some forms of heat, such as wood, even create irritating particles in the air.

Illnesses caused by environment and diet, as well as common winter illnesses, may have a negative impact on the health of your skin, too. All of these factors irritate your skin and contribute to the likelihood of flare-ups occurring.

Protective Sunlight is Lacking in Winter

While taking steps to prevent excessive sun exposure is healthy, getting some sunshine is necessary for keeping your skin well. The sun's ultraviolet rays slow down the excessive rate of skin cell growth that is characteristic of psoriasis.

If you have psoriasis, all of your skin cells reproduce faster than those of people who do not have the condition. During the warmer months of the year, you are likely to spend more time outside and probably don't have your face covered up like you may do when outside in chilly, windy environments.

Even if you spend plenty of time outdoors in winter, the sun's rays aren't as strong and the days are shorter than at any other time of the year. A lack of exposure to ultraviolet light results in increased skin cell growth, which in turn causes the development of plaques and other symptoms of psoriasis**.**

Winter Diets May Increase Skin Problems

During the winter months many people overeat and reach for heavy, sugary, fatty foods. These dietary choices stress your entire body, including your skin. Alcohol consumption may increase too, which makes psoriasis symptoms more severe.

Do You Smoke Indoors?

Smoking can contribute the formation of psoriatic lesions. If you smoke indoors during the chilly winter months

you are being exposed to more irritating compounds than if you smoke out in the fresh air.

In addition, smoking interferes with the health of your immune system. Toxins from smoking, especially indoors, can raise havoc with your skin.

Illness May Make Psoriasis Lesions Worse

Winter illnesses contribute to the formation of skin problems via several mechanisms. If you are ill, particularly with a fever, your skin may dehydrate.

Being ill means your immune system must focus on healing your body from the affecting organism. Your body's energy is diverted away from the normal day-to-day duties of repairing your skin and keeping it functioning at its best.

Strep throat is a common infection, particularity during the winter months. The strep organism can cause an outbreak of a specific type of psoriasis, called guttate psoriasis. Signs of guttate psoriasis include the formation of red, droplet-shaped lesion on the torso and extremities.

Tips for Keeping Your Skin Healthy During the Winter

If you do have flare-up, many of these and other actions will reduce the intensity and discomfort the lesions may cause. Let's take a look some very effective strategies to make your skin look and feel better this winter:

- Choose soft, warm clothing that allows your skin to "breathe."
- While it is tempting to be sedentary during cold winter months, get regular exercise, preferably outdoors.
- Use effective infection control and prevention strategies, such as washing your hands frequently.
- Use top quality skin and hair products.
- Gently massage a small amount of olive, sesame or other oil over your entire body before you shower each day — this keeps your skin from losing precious moisture and serves as a barrier against the elements.
- Include healthy fats in your diet.
- Drink plenty of fluids each day.
- Use a hypoallergenic sunblock if you are going to be outside for an extended period of time or if the weather is harsh.
- Phototherapy can sometimes be helpful during winter months.

Winter can be difficult if you suffer from psoriasis. Fortunately there are steps you can take to keep your skin healthier and more comfortable.