Journaling With Psoriasis

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The Benefits of Journaling With Psoriasis

The last thing you may think will help you with your psoriasis is a journal. How does writing things in a notebook help with managing the condition? Before you shoot the idea down, you should read on. How often is it that your doctor asks a myriad of questions about your psoriasis only for you to draw a blank on them? You would benefit by showing him your psoriasis journal. It would be a record on flare ups and other clues to help him decide on the appropriate course of treatment. But the benefits of journaling does not stop there. There is more to it than meets the eye.

Why Journal about Psoriasis?

- The essential elements of a journal for your psoriasis involves the symptoms and triggers. You should be sure to document every time a symptom crops up and its description: Was it severe? Did you have a new symptom arise? What do you think was the trigger? What food did you eat before the flare-up? All are very important for the doctor to know.
- You may have a few months' worth of documentation to present to your doctor. Many of the details you may have forgotten by the time you go to your appointment, but luckily, your journal will fill the doctor in where your memory cannot.
- You can write your journal online to share with family and friends, if they are a part of your support system. This will allow them to speak on your behalf if need be. A copy can be sent to the healthcare personnel for their records as well. Everyone will be up-to-date on your health condition.

What Needs to be in the Journal?

The National Psoriasis Foundation's medical program manager, April Abernethy, ND, is an advocate on psoriasis patients to do health journaling to identify triggers to flare-ups. She has many tips to follow to successfully journal about your condition:

- **Track your stress and your moods.** Stress is a culprit in flare-ups.
- **Keep up journaling on a daily basis.** This is essential so you don't forget important details.
- **Anything new that you consume or touches your skin should be noted.**
- **When you have a flare-up, describe it.** Is it mild or severe? What are the symptoms?

- **The journal works best if you document everything you eat and drink for several weeks.**
- **Be diligent in writing in your journal immediately after you eat.** It is best to do it before you forget. You want to accurately put in your actual mood and stress level.
- **Food records do not need to be too detailed.** Keep it simple. You can have check boxes for small, medium, and large portions.
- **If you keep the journal each day, it is optimal.** It should be kept at least 6 weeks or longer. This is so any patterns can be identified in the triggers of the psoriatic breakouts. You and your doctor may be able

to identify culprits that are causing your flare-ups.

Journaling for Peace of Mind

Journaling can also be a stress-reliever. If you have any issues in your life, writing about them can help get them off of your chest. You do not have to share your thoughts with anyone if you don't want to. Journaling can be therapeutic for many patients. If your stress levels go down, you will be less likely to experience flare-ups.