



Specialty Pharmacy

# Psoriatic Arthritis Wellness Guide

Walmart 

# Contents

Introduction..... 2

What is psoriatic arthritis? ..... 3

What causes psoriatic arthritis? ..... 3

What are the symptoms and health effects of psoriatic arthritis? ..... 3-4

How can psoriatic arthritis be treated? ..... 4-5

Resources & references .....6-7



## Introduction

Whether you’re actively managing a condition or just looking for information, Walmart Specialty Pharmacy is here to support you every step of the way. We make it easy to get your prescriptions, stay on track with your medication refills, and answer any other questions you may have.

We understand that treatment with medication isn’t always the whole picture and want to help you understand the lifestyle changes that can make managing your condition easier on a daily basis.

It is always recommended that you talk with your doctor about any changes to treatment plans.

Remember, your health conditions do not define you! It’s okay to ask for help.

## What is psoriatic arthritis?

Psoriatic arthritis (PsA) is an auto-immune disorder, which means the immune system begins to attack certain body areas. In PsA, the immune system attacks areas of the skin and joints. PsA causes red, sometimes scaly patches to appear on the skin and joint inflammation. As with arthritis, people with psoriatic arthritis often experience pain, stiffness, and swelling in joints throughout their body. And as with psoriasis, symptoms, and conditions can appear in a cycle of flare-ups and remission.<sup>1</sup>

While there is no cure for psoriatic arthritis, many treatments can help control symptoms and prevent impairment and further damage to the joints.

Here's what you should know about psoriatic arthritis.

## What causes psoriatic arthritis?

The exact cause of psoriatic arthritis is unknown. It is thought to result from a combination of genetic makeup and an environmental trigger like injury, infection, stress, or another factor.<sup>2</sup> Psoriasis is not infectious but can be brought about by other infections, such as strep throat.<sup>3</sup>

Psoriatic arthritis is also believed to be hereditary. Research has shown that about 40% of patients with psoriasis or psoriatic arthritis have a family history of those conditions.<sup>4</sup> The condition can begin in childhood but usually develops after age 30 and affects all genders equally.<sup>2</sup>

The majority of people with psoriatic arthritis develop psoriasis first. About one in every three people with psoriasis will develop psoriatic arthritis.<sup>5</sup> For other people, though, issues with the joints can begin before symptoms of psoriasis or at the same time.<sup>1</sup>

## What are the symptoms & health effects of psoriatic arthritis?

Though many symptoms are common, the specific effects and seriousness of psoriatic arthritis will be different from person to person. Symptoms can be mild, moderate, or severe, usually appearing in cycles of flare-ups and remissions.

Along with the patchy, itchy, scaly skin that comes with psoriasis—often with the appearance of a rash—psoriatic arthritis also affects the joints. It causes pain, stiffness, and swelling, sometimes in just one joint and sometimes in several. Other symptoms include fatigue and low-grade fever.<sup>2</sup>

Psoriatic arthritis can also cause cracking and pitting in the fingernails and toenails, as well as pain and stiffness in the lower back and buttocks.<sup>2</sup> Some forms of psoriatic arthritis can also affect the spine.<sup>1</sup>

If untreated, the health effects of psoriatic arthritis can be severe, including<sup>2</sup>

- Long-term damage to joints, bones, and cartilage
- Long-term damage to blood vessels and the heart
- Disturbed vision (also called uveitis)



- Redness and pain around the eyes (pink eye)
- Problems with the stomach and digestive system, which could include diarrhea
- Problems with the lungs affecting breathing
- Increased chance of obesity, high blood pressure, and poor cholesterol<sup>6</sup>
- Increased chance of diabetes<sup>6</sup>

Almost half of all people diagnosed with psoriatic arthritis are also obese and have shown to be 43% more likely to receive a diabetes diagnosis. These complications can increase the risk of further disease and weaken the body's ability to respond to treatment.<sup>7</sup>

## How can psoriatic arthritis be treated?

If you feel you have psoriatic arthritis, getting a proper diagnosis and treatment is important for a better chance of controlling the condition. Talk to your primary care doctor to get a referral to a specialist, such as a dermatologist or a rheumatologist.

For diagnosis, the physician will conduct a physical examination to check your joints, skin, hands, and feet. You'll also be asked about your personal habits, and your medical history will be reviewed. Tests may be ordered as necessary. These can include blood and joint fluid tests, and an x-ray, MRI, or skin biopsy.<sup>7</sup>

Although psoriatic arthritis cannot be cured, treatment is designed to stop the condition from worsening and reduce the inflammation, pain, and discomfort you may feel. The idea is to keep you as mobile and healthy as possible while working to eliminate the symptoms with medication or lifestyle changes.<sup>2</sup>



**Topical medications** for psoriatic arthritis include those from vitamin D, vitamin A, salicylic acid, coal tar, or corticosteroids. Medication may also be prescribed to treat the skin or the immune system. Sunlight and ultraviolet light treatments are also sometimes used.

Medications include:

- **Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)** like ibuprofen and naproxen sodium may help reduce pain and inflammation
- **Corticosteroids** may help reduce swelling and other symptoms and are taken orally or by injection
- **Disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs)** may help reduce inflammation and prevent symptoms from worsening. Available in traditional, biologic, and targeted versions, which offer different benefits depending on your symptoms.



**Physical therapy and occupational therapy** are sometimes prescribed for those with psoriatic arthritis. This can help you control symptoms with flexibility exercises, body movement coaching, hot and cold therapies, and more.



**Lifestyle changes** include getting more regular physical activity and eating a healthier diet, which can help you maintain a healthy weight, ease pain, and improve sleep and frame of mind.<sup>2</sup>



**Exercise** can help you reduce the pain and stiffness that comes with psoriatic arthritis. Resistance training helps build muscles, allowing for better, healthier joint support. Even low-impact activities like walking, biking, and swimming can help reduce the symptoms of psoriatic arthritis. Always check with your doctor or therapist before beginning new exercise programs.



**Skincare** is important for those with psoriatic arthritis. Psoriasis often leaves skin feeling dry and inflamed. Long showers and hot baths tend to increase this dryness, so specialists recommend restricting yourself to one warm—not hot—bath or shower each day. Use gentle soaps, cleaners, and a fragrance-free moisturizer within five minutes after bathing. You can find skincare products to help at Walmart; ask your pharmacist for recommendations.



**Clothing choices** are important. Specialists recommend wearing naturally soft clothes, like cotton, and washing clothes with fragrance-free cleaning products.<sup>2</sup> You can find soft clothing options, special detergents, and more at Walmart.



**Diet and nutrition** A balanced diet focusing on nutrition is essential for people with autoimmune conditions like psoriatic arthritis. Healthy food can help ease your symptoms and reduce your risk of acquiring another disease. Talk to your doctor about what foods may be best for you—Walmart Grocery offers a large variety of healthy choices.



**Quit smoking** tobacco and any overuse of alcohol since it can hurt anyone's health. They've also been connected to psoriatic arthritis flare-ups and can increase your risk of other severe conditions like cancer and cardiovascular disease.<sup>8</sup> If you're having trouble quitting smoking, you can find helpful books and products at Walmart. Ask your pharmacist for recommendations.



**Focus on your mental health** since patients with psoriatic arthritis report that it can be devastating to mental health and self-image.<sup>9</sup> Talk to your healthcare provider if you're experiencing depression or similar issues affecting your day-to-day well-being. Products designed to help you control your stress relief can also help.



**Guard against infection** since psoriatic arthritis is an autoimmune disorder. Make sure you're up to date on your immunizations and vaccines. Wash your hands frequently and avoid close contact with people who may be sick.



**Get support** from your family and friends. Psoriatic arthritis can be a challenge to your physical, mental, and emotional health—and those closest to you are likely to be affected, too. Involve your family in your treatment plan if possible.



## Resources & references

- **National Psoriasis Foundation (NPF).** In-person and online, the NPF is one of the nation's leading authorities on psoriasis. Visit [psoriasis.org](https://www.psoriasis.org/) for a list of helpful ways to get involved with the psoriasis community, make new friends, and find the resources and connections that can help you thrive: <https://www.psoriasis.org/>
  - **MyPsoriasisTeam.** Join an online forum that is available all day, every day, offering the opportunity to chat with thousands of other folks living with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis: <https://www.mypsoriasisiteam.com/NationalPsoriasisFoundation>
  - **Psoriasis One to One.** Because sometimes you need someone to talk to, the NPF's One to One program is designed to match you with someone who has been where you are and can offer some experienced and friendly guidance: <https://www.psoriasis.org/one-to-one/>
  - **The National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS).** Part of the National Institutes of Health, the NIAMS website offers a full range of clinical information to help you better understand psoriasis and how to live with it. There's also the chance to join in clinical trials to help experts improve treatment: <https://www.niams.nih.gov/health-topics/psoriasis>
1. The Mayo Clinic. "Psoriatic arthritis." MayoClinic.org, 2 Oct 2021: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/psoriatic-arthritis/symptoms-causes/syc-20354076>
  2. Arthritis Foundation. "Psoriatic Arthritis." Arthritis.org: <https://www.arthritis.org/diseases/psoriatic-arthritis>

3. Sigurdardottir, S L et al. "The association of sore throat and psoriasis might be explained by histologically distinctive tonsils and increased expression of skin-homing molecules by tonsil T cells." Clinical and experimental immunology vol. 174,1 (2013):  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3784221/>
4. Solmaz, Dilek, et al. "Impact of Having Family History of Psoriasis or Psoriatic Arthritis on Psoriatic Disease." Arthritis care & research vol. 72,1 (2020):  
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30680951/>
5. National Psoriasis Foundation. "About Psoriatic Arthritis." Psoriasis.org, 18 Jun 2021:  
<https://www.psoriasis.org/about-psoriatic-arthritis/>
6. Rath, Linda. "Surprising Complications of Psoriatic Arthritis." WebMD, 27 Apr 2021:  
<https://www.webmd.com/arthritis/psoriatic-arthritis/psa-surprising-complications>
7. Armstrong AW. "Psoriasis." JAMA Dermatol. 2017;153(9):956:  
<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamadermatology/fullarticle/2653218>
8. The National Psoriasis Foundation. "Related Conditions of Psoriasis." Psoriasis.org, 8 Oct 2020:  
<https://www.psoriasis.org/related-conditions/>
9. The National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases. "Psoriasis." 2020 Sep:  
<https://www.niams.nih.gov/health-topics/psoriasis>

We're here to help!  
For a list of participating pharmacy locations visit  
[\*\*www.walmart.com/aispoc\*\*](http://www.walmart.com/aispoc)

