

# You Just Found Out You Have Psoriasis—These are the 6 Diet & Lifestyle Changes Dermatologists Say to Make First

Discover doctor-recommended tips to manage psoriasis—including diet, exercise and stress management—for reduced flare-ups and healthier skin.

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If you've just been diagnosed with psoriasis, you're far from alone: 125 million people worldwide have this condition, with over 8 million in the U.S. alone. Psoriasis is a chronic autoimmune condition that accelerates skin cell production, leading to red, scaly patches that can be uncomfortable and challenging to manage. While there's no cure, taking the right steps early in your diagnosis can make a big difference in controlling symptoms and reducing flare-ups.

"Psoriasis is not just a skin condition," explains Gary Goldenberg, M.D., a dermatologist and founder of Goldenberg Dermatology. "It's a systemic condition with potential internal manifestations, such as arthritis, metabolic syndrome, depression and even a higher risk of cancer. This means management should address both the skin and internal inflammation."

In this article, we'll share the top dermatologist and dietitian recommendations to help you better manage psoriasis and improve your quality of life. Read on to learn more.

## 1. Eat a Well-Balanced Diet

Chronic inflammation is at the core of psoriasis, and your food choices can either help reduce or exacerbate this inflammation. A 2022 study in *Nutrients* suggests that eating a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and omega-3 fatty acids—while avoiding alcohol, red meat and processed foods—can help manage psoriasis and related health issues, such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

“A well-balanced diet can help manage psoriasis by reducing inflammation, supporting the immune system and improving overall skin health,” says Trista Best, RD, a registered dietitian with Balance One Supplements. “Additionally, having a BMI classified as overweight or obese is linked to more severe psoriasis. Maintaining a healthy weight through a balanced diet can significantly help reduce symptom severity.”

Lindsey Bordone, M.D., an assistant professor of dermatology at Columbia University, tells EatingWell, “For patients who develop psoriasis after gaining weight, weight loss can be a major driver in reducing symptoms. In some cases, losing weight can lead to significantly less psoriasis or a return to baseline.”

## 2. Focus on Anti-Inflammatory Foods

Incorporating anti-inflammatory foods into your daily meals can be crucial in managing psoriasis. Whole foods like fruits, vegetables, legumes, fish and whole grains help reduce inflammation and provide essential nutrients for skin repair and immune support.

“Include leafy greens, berries, tomatoes and colorful vegetables for their antioxidant content,” recommends Best. “Add fatty fish like salmon, mackerel and sardines or plant-based omega-3 sources like chia seeds and walnuts to help reduce inflammation.”

Goldenberg adds that some people may benefit from a gluten-free diet. “Studies suggest that a gluten-free diet may decrease psoriasis symptoms even in individuals without a gluten allergy. Keeping a food diary to identify triggers can also be helpful.”

## 3. Avoid Trigger Foods

Certain foods can worsen inflammation and trigger psoriasis flare-ups. Bordone explains, “Alcohol and stress are two of the biggest triggers for psoriasis flares. While stress can be challenging to control, avoiding alcohol is a simple yet impactful change you can make.”

Common triggers include processed foods and added sugars, red meat and gluten. “Tracking your food intake and symptoms can help you understand how certain foods impact your condition,” says Best.

## 4. Stay Active with Regular Exercise

According to a 2022 review, regular exercise offers plenty of benefits for those with psoriasis, including healthy weight management, stress reduction and improved mood. As per the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise per week.

“Exercise is essential for managing stress and supporting a healthy immune response,” says Bordone. “Stress is a known trigger for psoriasis, and staying active can help counteract it.”

## 5. Manage Stress Effectively

Stress is a well-known trigger for psoriasis flare-ups. Some stress in life is inevitable, but healthy ways to manage it are important for overall health and psoriasis management. “Stress reduction is critical,” says Goldenberg. “Simple practices like meditation, yoga or even deep breathing can help regulate cortisol levels and reduce inflammation.”

## 6. Get Enough Quality Sleep

It’s no secret that quality sleep is vital for healthy immune function and healthier skin. “Sleep is one of the most important factors for managing autoimmune conditions like psoriasis,” explains Bordone. The National Institutes of Health recommends getting seven to nine hours of sleep per night for optimal health. Some strategies to help support healthier sleep include having consistent sleep and wake times, setting a bedtime routine, avoiding screens before bed and limiting late-night alcohol.

## Other Tips for Managing Psoriasis

While these tips can be helpful for those looking to better manage their condition, they're not the only factors that can impact inflammation and skin health. Here are additional ways you can manage psoriasis:

**Support Gut Health:** Incorporate probiotic-rich foods like yogurt, kefir and fermented vegetables and prebiotic-rich foods like vegetables, legumes and whole grains to promote a healthy gut microbiome.

**Get Enough Vitamin D:** Many people with psoriasis have low vitamin D levels. Safe sun exposure or supplementation can help. Talk to your doctor if you're concerned about your vitamin D levels, and to get individualized advice.

**Protect Your Skin:** Use sunscreen or protective clothing daily to help prevent sunburns, which can worsen symptoms and cause flare-ups.

**Stay Hydrated:** Drinking plenty of water throughout the day can help keep your skin hydrated and reduce irritation.

#### The Bottom Line

Receiving a psoriasis diagnosis can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools and support, you can take control of your health. To help manage psoriasis, reduce flare-ups and improve your quality of life, eat a balanced diet rich in anti-inflammatory foods, exercise regularly, manage stress and prioritize quality sleep. Speak with your health care provider or a dermatologist to help create a personalized treatment plan for addressing your psoriasis.

#### **SOURCE:**

<https://www.eatingwell.com/diet-lifestyle-changes-to-make-after-psoriasis-diagnosis-8759562>