

## Psoriasis And The Summer: They Actually Do Get Along

(NAPSA)—Warm weather is upon us, which means shorts and tank tops will be making an appearance around America. For most people, the thought of wearing cool clothing in warm weather is a welcome part of the year. However, for the many people living with psoriasis, which often causes raised, red and scaly patches of skin, the idea of wearing more revealing clothing can be intimidating. Nearly 7 million American adults suffer from psoriasis.

### What is Psoriasis?

Psoriasis is a noncontagious autoimmune disease. With psoriasis, the immune system thinks the skin is being attacked, which causes the skin cells to grow thick, red patches to help protect the skin. There are five different types of psoriasis, but the most common form is called plaque psoriasis. Approximately 1.5 million Americans live with moderate to severe plaque psoriasis. This condition appears as raised, red patches covered with a silvery white buildup of dead skin cells. Psoriasis can occur on any part of the body and can be associated with other serious health conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease and depression.

### Warm Weather Can Help Improve Psoriasis Symptoms

The good news for people with psoriasis is that it can actually improve in the spring and summer. Many people with psoriasis know that exposure to natural sunlight and outdoor activities help make their red scaly patches less noticeable. To make the most



### Summer fun may be good for your skin if you have psoriasis.

of this time of year, people with psoriasis should consider these four tips after first speaking with their dermatologist:

**1. Natural sunlight, in moderation, may help.** Psoriasis plaques may benefit from exposure to some natural sun rays. Light therapy has been a standard therapy for psoriasis and during this time of year it is in abundance.

**2. Cotton is a must have for your summer wardrobe.** Wear light cotton clothing instead of synthetics. Cotton is a breathable fabric that can reduce itching and can also help reduce perspiration—all things that can keep your skin from becoming irritated.

**3. Have fun at the pool but consider the water before you dive in.** Pool or hot tub water can soften and clear crusty, hard areas and flaking. However, highly chlorinated pool water can irritate inflamed psoriasis plaques and lead to dry skin if the chlorine is not rinsed off immediately after swimming. Shower as soon as possible after going in a pool or hot tub to avoid further irritation and be sure to apply moisturizer.

**4. Seaside is better than poolside.** People with psoriasis find that salt water sloughs off scales. So, if you have the option, a day at the beach may be well worth the drive.

### Team Up with Your Dermatologist

Psoriasis is a serious disease so while summertime activities and warm weather can help improve psoriasis symptoms, it is still important to speak with a dermatologist to determine the best course of treatment for you.

Dermatologists generally treat psoriasis based on several key factors including the severity of the disease, type of psoriasis and the patient's response to initial treatments. Generally, for those people who have mild psoriasis—isolated small patches on the skin—topical treatments including moisturizers and over-the-counter and prescription creams, ointments and shampoos are usually sufficient to help control the plaques.

Treating moderate to severe psoriasis may require more than topical treatments. Doctors may use treatments including steroids, oral medications, or light therapy. Doctors may also prescribe biologic drugs, a relatively new treatment for psoriasis, which act on specific immune system cells and proteins. In order to determine the best treatment strategy, people living with psoriasis should take an active role in their treatment plan and discuss their options with a dermatologist.

### Learn More

For more information about psoriasis and to find a dermatologist near by, visit [www.psoriasisconnect.com](http://www.psoriasisconnect.com).