

# Inside And Out—The Pain Of Psoriatic Arthritis

(NAPSA)—Imagine having a disease that not only causes pain and stiffness on the inside, while affecting how you look on the outside, but also causes you to experience embarrassment and being treated differently. Imagine you were living with psoriatic arthritis. For the 500,000 people suffering from this chronic disease, this can be an unfortunate reality.

Psoriatic arthritis is a chronic inflammatory disease that can cause pain, stiffness and swelling in and around the joints. Psoriatic arthritis is related to psoriasis, a chronic skin disease that causes dry, red, scaly patches (lesions) on the skin. The physical symptoms associated with this complex disease may not be the only source of pain for sufferers. The duality of symptoms—joint and skin—can cause not only physical pain but emotional pain as well. Lack of education about the condition and misunderstandings in public can be extremely frustrating and leave people feeling helpless to the point that many avoid public places and interaction with others and may even change their daily activities.

“For many years, starting when I was in my teens, psoriatic arthritis pretty much dictated how I lived my life, whether it was being embarrassed to wear clothes that would show my arms and legs or being stuck on the sidelines because of my aching joints unable to enjoy sports. Psoriatic arthritis defined who I was,” said 47-year-old Annie Escalona, who has endured psoriatic arthritis for more than 30 years.

To better meet the needs of people living with psoriatic arthritis, the National Psoriasis Foundation, in partnership with Abbott, has

launched a new program, Psoriatic Arthritis Total approach to Health (PATH). PATH provides tools and information for managing both the physical and emotional aspects of the disease. Developed in coordination with a rheumatologist, psychologist, dermatologist, dermatology nurse, cosmetology instructor and several psoriatic arthritis patients, the PATH program is an online resource, [www.psoriasis.org/PATH](http://www.psoriasis.org/PATH), which features tips from experts on reducing stress, exercising, eating well and incorporating other healthy living ideas into everyday life. The site also includes tips on skincare and style to help people with psoriatic arthritis manage the often visible skin symptoms.

The need for this patient program has never been more apparent; according to a new National Psoriasis Foundation survey, nearly half of respondents reported that their psoriatic arthritis caused large problems in everyday life. In addition:

- Nearly two in three people with psoriatic arthritis who have avoided professional services such as haircuts, manicures and skin therapy have done so to avoid embarrassment. While approximately half of respondents avoided these because they were afraid of the reactions from providers or other patrons.

- One in three people indicated that they were refused treatment by a stylist, barber, skincare specialist, manicurist or massage therapist.

- Two in three respondents were either overweight or obese, conditions that can cause undue stress on a person’s joints and exacerbate the physical symptoms

## PATH Top Tips For Total Health

For more information, go to [www.psoriasis.org/PATH](http://www.psoriasis.org/PATH)

### Stress Management:

- Take time to be alone and identify what is important to you. Work toward those goals as a priority.
- Seek out the company of those you trust and with whom you can be yourself. Having a strong personal support network can lead to better stress management.

### Diet And Nutrition:

- Proper nutrition is important. Eating plenty of fruits and vegetables, grains and lean meats and avoiding “convenience” foods will help manage your weight and keep you healthy.
- Eating several small, healthy meals throughout the day provides your body with steady fuel that will help maintain your energy levels.

### Exercise/Physical Activity:

- Taking a walk is an excellent way to get exercise. If your feet, ankles or knees are affected by arthritis, you may need a walking aid or shoe inserts to avoid putting undue stress on your lower joints.
- Be sure to talk to your doctor before starting any exercise program.

### Smart Style:

- Using moisturizers can be helpful at improving skin redness and scaling.

Source: [www.psoriasis.org/PATH](http://www.psoriasis.org/PATH)



of psoriatic arthritis.

The PATH program helps people with psoriatic arthritis and their loved ones learn to manage living with their disease, offering encouragement and support so they may lead healthier, more fulfilling lives.

For more information on PATH, please visit [www.psoriasis.org/PATH](http://www.psoriasis.org/PATH).