

Ask Leyla: Do you have any dietary recommendations for psoriasis?



Q: Our 26-year-old, otherwise healthy daughter has psoriasis on her legs and elbows. She has been taking injections of Humira, tried light therapy, a gluten-free diet, and topical creams, all with little effect.

What else would you recommend to help her?

A: Psoriasis is an autoimmune condition where skin cell growth goes into overdrive, creating the scaly plaques often associated with it. While mainstream medicine commonly recommends the use of immune suppressants such as Humira, nutritional medicine has a less harmful approach.

Your daughter is already on the right track with a gluten-free diet, however, I've never seen complete remission of psoriasis with a gluten-free diet alone. Casein, a protein found in dairy, also has to be eliminated. It's very gratifying to see psoriasis completely disappear when the patient undertakes a gluten-free AND casein-free diet.

Casein is found in all animal milk (cow's, sheep's goat's, etc.). The casein in

cow's milk is the most problematic in autoimmune conditions therefore many patients are able to tolerate sheep's or goat's milk products. However, I must say I don't see *complete* remission in the majority of my patients until ALL casein is removed from the diet.

Of great benefit in addition to removing all gluten and dairy is the elimination of any food allergens. And because of the autoimmune nature of psoriasis, additional improvement may be achieved with the removal of the Nightshade family of vegetables which include tomatoes, white potatoes, peppers (including cayenne and paprika) and eggplant.

Last but certainly not least, vitamin D is an important immune modulator. Make sure serum levels are in the 55-80 ng/ml range.

To your health!

Leyla Muedin, MS, RD, CDN