

Psoriasis: Controlled

YOUR GUIDE TO BIOLOGICAL TREATMENTS FOR PLAQUE PSORIASIS

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Psoriasis Association Southland is the main support network for people in New Zealand affected by psoriasis and psoriasis-related conditions.

About Psoriasis Association Southland

Psoriasis Association Southland aims to:

- Educate sufferers, their families and the public about psoriasis and its treatments
- Support sufferers and their families
- Distribute new information and research results
- Establish regional support groups
- Encourage research into new treatments and potential cures.

To support these aims, Psoriasis Association Southland fundraises at the local level and maintains contact with government departments, health authorities, pharmaceutical companies and psoriasis support groups worldwide.

We welcome your involvement with Psoriasis Association Southland and encourage you to consider membership.

For more information, please visit www.psoriasis.org.nz



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Foreword from Patricia Officer Young

President, Psoriasis Association Southland



This booklet is the second in a series developed by Psoriasis Association Southland in partnership with AbbVie to mark the 35th anniversary of Psoriasis Association Southland.

Booklet two, **PSORIASIS CONTROLLED**, provides an overview of biological treatment options for plaque psoriasis.

We encourage you to review the set of three easy-to-read booklets on plaque psoriasis and we trust that the information provided assists you in your journey with the management and treatment of your psoriasis.

The three booklets are available from Psoriasis Association Southland and can be downloaded for free from the Psoriasis Association Southland website: www.psoriasis.org.nz.

Keeping my psoriasis under control

There are now a number of effective treatments available to help keep your psoriasis at bay. Your doctor may take a 1-2-3 approach to your psoriasis treatment. This approach begins with topical therapy (such as ointments and creams) then moves to phototherapy and then systemic therapy, which works inside the body.

The 1-2-3 approach evolved because treatments that work well at first may lose their effectiveness over time. Also, a treatment that works very well in one person may have little effect in another.^{2,3}

1. Topical treatments are creams, lotions, ointments, mousses or gels that are rubbed directly into the skin and are typically given when psoriasis is mild to moderate. The different types of topical treatments are:^{2,3}

- Vitamin D analogues
- Coal tar preparations
- Topical steroids
- Dithranol
- Vitamin A analogues

2. Phototherapy is a psoriasis treatment that uses ultraviolet light. Approximately 80% of people with psoriasis notice an improvement in their skin after they have been in the sunshine, but of the ultraviolet rays emitted by the sun, narrowband UVB is considered to demonstrate benefit for people with psoriasis. You will need to attend the phototherapy centre two or three times a week for several weeks and the chemical agent psoralen (either in tablet or bath form) is required to make the skin more sensitive to the therapy.^{2,3}

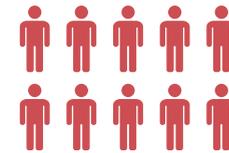
Your psoriasis may not respond or may stop responding to topical treatments and/or phototherapy, in which case, systemic medications may be prescribed.

3. Systemic medications affect the whole body (or “system”) and can address the underlying cause of psoriasis. They are generally reserved for people with moderate to severe psoriasis, psoriatic arthritis, or psoriasis that affects the hands, feet or nails.^{2,3} They include medications taken by mouth, such as methotrexate, ciclosporin or acitretin. Biologic treatments (biologics) are another type of systemic medication.^{2,3} These are given by injection and are generally prescribed for people whose psoriasis is no longer controlled with other systemic medications. More information is given about biologics further on in this booklet.

It is important that you talk with your doctor to find a treatment regimen that works best for you.

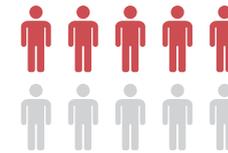
Fast facts:*

99%



TOPICAL TREATMENT
Almost all (99%) of New Zealanders surveyed with psoriasis have tried creams and lotions, but 56% were not satisfied with this type of treatment.

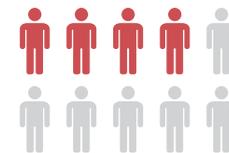
47%



ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE
Almost half (47%) of New Zealanders surveyed with psoriasis have tried herbal or holistic medicines, but dissatisfaction with this type of treatment is high (65%).

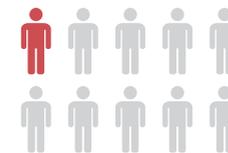


40%



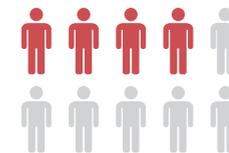
PHOTOTHERAPY
Phototherapy has been used by 40% of New Zealanders surveyed with psoriasis and 69% are satisfied or very satisfied with this treatment.

10%



INJECTABLE MEDICATION
Only one in 10 New Zealanders surveyed with psoriasis have used injectable medication.

40%



TREATMENT COST
Cost prevents 40% of New Zealanders surveyed with psoriasis from seeking treatment.

*From *Psoriasis Uncovered 2011 – a survey of 308 New Zealanders with psoriasis*¹



What are biologics and how do they differ from other treatments?

Biologics are injectable treatments that modify the immune response to help improve psoriasis.²

Psoriasis begins in the immune system when certain immune system cells (e.g T-cells) are triggered, become overactive and release substances that cause the skin to multiply faster than normal.²

Biologics are designed to treat psoriasis by targeting these overactive cells in the

body. They work by mimicking naturally occurring molecules or by blocking the actions of naturally occurring proteins.²

As biologics target a specific part of the immune system they leave normal tissues intact and uninvolved organs unharmed.⁴

Are biologics appropriate for me?

You have a Psoriasis Area and Severity Index (PASI) of 10 or more

AND/OR

You have a Dermatology Life Quality Index (DLQI) of 10 or more

AND/OR

Other treatments have not worked and/or have caused intolerable side effects

A dermatologist (skin specialist) will be best placed to advise on whether biologics are right for you. Biologics are usually limited to people with moderate to severe psoriasis.⁵ According to international guidelines, you should be assessed against criteria similar to the one in the diagram above.⁵

In addition, in order to access a biologic that is funded by the New Zealand government on the Pharmaceutical Schedule, adult patients must satisfy relevant criteria before approval will be granted. A dermatologist will complete this application for you.

The treatment I am currently using has essentially brought my psoriasis completely under control. Now, only an expert can tell I suffer from psoriatic arthritis and psoriasis and I feel like a whole new person.

GRAHAM, 30, PSORIASIS SUFFERER, KERIKERI



Can I use biologics along with other treatments?

It is best to talk to your dermatologist about whether using any other treatments with a biologic is right for you.

How safe are biologics?

Biologics are generally prescribed for an individual whose psoriasis has not responded to other treatments or is no longer controlled with other systemic medications.^{2,3,4} They are a viable treatment option for an individual who has experienced harmful side effects from other treatments.⁴

Talk to your dermatologist about whether biologics are right for you.

You should discuss the risks as well as the side effects of biologic treatment. It is important to weigh these against the benefits of biologics when making a treatment decision.

Biologics are not suitable for everyone.

Like all medications, biologics have side effects.

Biologic treatment can increase the risk of infection.⁴ If you develop any sign of serious infection such as a fever or flu-like symptoms or have any cuts or open sores, contact your dermatologist or GP immediately.

COMMON SIDE EFFECTS MAY INCLUDE:⁴

- Respiratory infections
- Flu-like symptoms
- Reaction at the site of injection

LESS COMMON SIDE EFFECTS MAY INCLUDE:⁴

- Serious nervous system disorders, such as multiple sclerosis, seizures, or inflammation of the nerves of the eyes
- Blood disorders
- Certain types of cancer

For specific side effect information, download the Consumer Medicine Information (CMI) on individual biologics from New Zealand Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Authority (Medsafe):
www.medsafe.govt.nz/Consumers/cmi/CMIForm.asp

How do I know what biologic is right for me?



There is a range of biologic treatment options that might be able to help you with your psoriasis. As each treatment option is different it might be helpful to think about what are the most important factors you want from your treatment, then work with your dermatologist to help match the right treatment to your needs.

Some of the following questions may help you to evaluate how important different areas are to you.

Work through the list of questions on the following pages, ranking your feelings, with 5 being extremely important and 1 being not as important.

If you circle 3, 4 or 5 for any of these questions, mention this to your dermatologist who will be able to help guide you through the process to match you to the treatment that is best suited for you.

Fill this in and take it along to your next appointment with your dermatologist

How important is the effectiveness of your psoriasis treatment?
(e.g. symptom control or improvement)

1 2 3 4 5
Not as important ←-----→ Extremely important

How important is it to consider the possible side effects of your treatment?

1 2 3 4 5
Not as important ←-----→ Extremely important

How important is the safety record of your treatment?
(e.g. how many people has it been used in?)

1 2 3 4 5
Not as important ←-----→ Extremely important

How important is the number of years the treatment has been available?

1 2 3 4 5
Not as important ← → Extremely important

How important is the speed of response of your treatment?
(e.g. are results seen quickly?)

1 2 3 4 5
Not as important ← → Extremely important

How important is it to see other benefits from your treatment
(e.g. does it help with associated conditions like joint pain, psoriatic arthritis,
Crohn's disease, depression and mental health)?

1 2 3 4 5
Not as important ← → Extremely important

How important is it for the treatment to be easy to use?
(e.g. is it ready to inject or can it be administered on your own?)

1 2 3 4 5
Not as important ← → Extremely important

How important are wider support programmes offered by treatments?
(e.g. nurse support)

1 2 3 4 5
Not as important ← → Extremely important

How important is it for you to consider the frequency of treatments required?

1 2 3 4 5
Not as important ← → Extremely important

This decision tool has been adapted from What can you do to manage your psoriasis? A decision aid for plaque psoriasis patients. Authored by Jerry Tan, MD, FRCPC, Windsor Clinical Research Inc, Windsor, Ontario, Canada 2011.



How do I ensure I get the most from my biologic treatment?

Working with your dermatologist to choose the right biologic and treatment strategy for your individual situation will be critical to help manage your psoriasis.

In order to help get the most from your biologic therapy it is important to be open and honest with your dermatologist. The following tips should help in your visits with your dermatologist.



Make the most of any support programmes. Talk to your dermatologist about how to access support and services offered with your treatment.



Keep a diary that tracks how your psoriasis is affecting you, your treatment goals and how the treatment is making you feel. Bring this diary to your appointments so that you can refer to it as needed.



When speaking with your dermatologist do not be embarrassed about asking questions! It is their job to answer them. And it's ok to say, 'I don't understand'. It often helps to make a list of questions ahead of your appointment and bring this along to the visit to discuss.



I have to inject myself regularly – which means battling a lifelong fear of needles – but I am now almost free of psoriasis with the help of these injections, and I feel good about myself again.

**KATHRYN, 45, PSORIASIS SUFFERER,
WELLINGTON**



Where can I get further information about psoriasis?

Other sources of information

Psoriasis Association Southland

A New Zealand patient support organisation that aims to educate sufferers, their families and the public about psoriasis and its treatments. www.psoriasis.org.nz

New Zealand Dermatological Society (NZDS)

The National Association of New Zealand registered specialist dermatologists – medical experts in skin diseases, conditions and their treatment. Refer to their website to search for a dermatologist in your area and ask your GP for a referral. Also see the DermNet website for authoritative information about skin diseases, conditions and treatment for patients and their health professionals. www.dermnetnz.org

International Federation of Psoriasis Associations (IFPA)

A non-profit organisation made up of psoriasis associations from around the world. www.ifpa-pso.org

Psoriasis Australia

A source of information for people with psoriasis and their carers. www.psoriasisaustralia.org.au and www.lifewithpsoriasis.com.au

National Psoriasis Foundation

National Psoriasis Foundation is the world's largest nonprofit organisation serving people with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. Their mission is to find a cure for psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis and to eliminate their devastating effects through research, advocacy and education. www.psoriasis.org

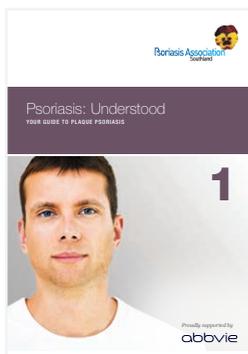
Psoriasis Association

The Psoriasis Association is the leading national membership organisation for people affected by psoriasis in the UK. www.psoriasis-association.org.uk

Your dermatologist is the first port-of-call for further information on biologics and whether this treatment option is right for you.

If you do not have a dermatologist, ask your General Practitioner to provide you with a referral.

In addition to this booklet, there are two further easy-to-read, information booklets that can be downloaded for free from the Psoriasis Association Southland website:
www.psoriasis.org.nz



1 PSORIASIS UNDERSTOOD

Explains what psoriasis is, causes, symptoms and treatment options



3 PSORIASIS: MORE THAN A SKIN THING

Information, tips and facts about living with psoriasis and associated conditions in New Zealand



Psoriasis Skin Diary

Psoriasis Skin Diary is a mobile application (app) available for iPhone and iPad, designed specifically for Australians and New Zealanders with psoriasis.

The Psoriasis Skin Diary app provides a user friendly way for people to record how their skin is behaving and also better manage their psoriasis through a range of tools and personalisation features.

This app can help you track your symptoms so you can have a better conversation with your doctor. Tools include a Skin Diary with photo library and Skin Checklist. In addition, there are several personalisation features, such as appointment reminders, a personal profile form, password protection and a resource section.

You can download the Psoriasis Skin Diary app from iTunes for free. This app was developed by AbbVie in partnership with Psoriasis Australia and the Skin and Cancer Foundation of Victoria.

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2. **The Psoriasis Association**. www.psoriasis-association.org.uk. Accessed May 2013.
3. **Oakley A**. Best Practice Advocacy Centre New Zealand (bpacnz). The treatment of psoriasis in primary care. Best Practice Journal (BPJ). Issue 23. September 2009. Available at: <http://www.bpac.org.nz/magazine/2009/september/psoriasis.asp#specialist>. Accessed May 2013.
4. **National Psoriasis Foundation**. <http://www.psoriasis.org/>. Accessed May 2013.
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About AbbVie

AbbVie is a global, research-based biopharmaceutical company formed in 2013 following separation from Abbott. AbbVie combines the focus and passion of a leading-edge biotech with the expertise and capabilities of a long-established pharmaceutical leader to develop and market advanced therapies that address some of the worlds most complex and serious diseases. For further information on the company and its people, portfolio and commitments, please visit www.abbvie.co.nz



*About Psoriasis Uncovered New Zealand 2011

Psoriasis Uncovered was a joint initiative between Psoriasis Association Southland and AbbVie to assess the impact of living with psoriasis in New Zealand. Its aim was to understand and document the needs of people with psoriasis and improve awareness and understanding of one of the most common skin conditions in the world. The Psoriasis Uncovered survey was based on a sample size of 308 participants who completed an anonymous questionnaire either on paper or online over an eight-week period (31st October 2011 – 16th December 2011). People living with psoriasis in New Zealand were invited to participate in the survey via information available in dermatology clinics, Psoriasis Association Southland, a link on the DermNet website, and advertisements in metro newspapers.

Psoriasis Association Southland is grateful to Psoriasis Australia, who developed the original version of this booklet, for their agreement to tailor, reproduce and distribute this material in New Zealand.