

PSO NEWSWORTHY

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Welcome!

Welcome the Canadian Association of Psoriasis Patients (CAPP), a patient organization dedicated to helping psoriasis patients and their families, providing support, bringing together the best of emerging psoriasis news, research results, and key information that can truly make a difference in how you live your life. Check out our website at www.canadianpsoriasis.ca, visit us on Facebook: and don't forget to sign up for our newsletter.



Myth Buster

Myth – Psoriasis is exacerbated by poor hygiene

Fact – Psoriasis is an autoimmune disease, and is not caused or worsened by poor hygiene. Flare-ups can be triggered by stress, skin injury, infection, hormonal changes or exposure to certain medications.

Psoriasis and the Sun

It is that time of year again – where we wait for the snow to melt, the cold to disappear and the warmer temperatures and sunshine to be upon us. Summer can also bring a welcome reprieve to many who struggle with psoriasis.

Studies have shown that sunlight can be very beneficial to psoriasis patients and is considered a natural alternative to artificial ultraviolet therapy. The sun can play a role in helping to clear psoriasis symptoms in some cases. Sunlight can also stimulate your body to produce more vitamin D, a nutrient that contributes to reducing inflammation throughout your body, and is beneficial to immune function. Vitamin D is found in very few foods naturally, so eating Vitamin D rich foods such as salmon, tuna and egg yolks, as well as safe exposure to the sunlight can increase your Vitamin D levels.

While taking advantage of the sun's



healing benefits, it is important to do so safely. It is always encouraged to check with your doctor since medications that you may be taking can increase your photosensitivity. It is also important to follow these tips prior to sun exposure:

- Apply a broad spectrum sunscreen to all unaffected areas of your skin
- Try to stay out of the sun when it is at its hottest (between 10 am and 3 pm)
- Limit exposure times to 10-30 minutes to reduce the risk of sun damage
- Wear Sunglasses

So while enjoying your time in the sun it is always important to stay safe and protected. Too much sun can aggravate your psoriasis and increase your risk of skin cancer, so it is important to avoid getting a sun burn and limiting your time exposed to direct sunlight.

A Patient Story: Brooks



Brooks has been lucky...after a very long road of trial and error he was finally able to find a treatment that worked and gave him the one thing every psoriasis patient hopes for...clear skin. For about 4 years Brooks has had a "giant weight lifted off" his back and was living life to its fullest with clear skin. And then it happened – the day he had was hopeful would never come – an outbreak. He went to bed with clear skin and awoke, a full outbreak with spots in the 100s. [Read Brooks' story](#) and how he is coping with this flare-up. [Share your patient story](#) with us for a chance to be featured on our website and in this newsletter.

Psoriasis Treatment

Does your Province make the grade?

Do you know if it is better to be a psoriasis patient in British Columbia or Prince Edward Island? If you live in Quebec would the medication you need be covered under your provincial health care plan? Do you know how long the average wait time is to see a dermatologist in Newfoundland?

In October of 2014 the Canadian Association of Psoriasis Patients released its [Psoriasis Report Card: Access to Care and Treatment for Psoriasis Patients in Canada](#). In fact, this Report was so well received within the dermatological community it has been awarded the [2014 Canadian Dermatology Association Public Education Award](#).

This extensive Report Card looked at 3 key issues facing psoriasis patients throughout the country and provided each province with a Pass, Fail or Needs Improvement mark in the following areas:

- 1. Access to Care** – We looked at how long a patient has to wait to see a dermatologist, and how many dermatologists are practicing in each province. We looked at how they are distributed among rural and urban settings, as well as the falling numbers of dermatologists and the number of new dermatologists being trained to replace those that are retiring. We discuss the potential root cause of these shortages such as remuneration and offer recommendations to improve the access to care.
- 2. Access to Phototherapy** - Phototherapy is recommended as an effective and inexpensive mode to treat psoriasis and we looked at the access to these services



in Canada. Despite the benefits of phototherapy we found that facilities are either non-existent or sparse depending on where you live and not a single provincial or territorial government includes home phototherapy as an insured service.

- 3. Access to Medications** – Although there were a few provinces that received a passing grade in this area, all jurisdictions place inordinate restrictions on the use of standard therapy drugs. In fact, not a single province or territory covers all the medications recommended in the Canadian Psoriasis Treatment Guidelines and newer drugs entering the system are usually restricted.

The Report Card also examines two other issues that are a growing concern for psoriasis patients; the changing environment of private health benefits plans and subsequent entry biologic drugs (SEBs).

Be sure to read our report to find out how your province fares in relation to the rest of the country. The findings of this [Report Card](#) serve as our foundation for the advocacy work we do to improve a patient's access to effective care and treatment of Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis.

It's in the Genes?



Is Psoriasis Hereditary? – The simple, yet not so simple answer is "it can be". Approximately 40% of patients with psoriasis have a family member who has it. A child has a 1 in 4 chance of developing psoriasis if one parent has it. If one identical twin has psoriasis the other identical twin has a 70% chance of having it too. There is a clear genetic component to psoriasis, yet this is no guarantee that a person will develop the disease. The genetics of psoriasis is complex and involves many genes, and even if they are inherited in the right combination, psoriasis may still not appear. Researchers continue to look for the exact cause for psoriasis in hopes of someday finding a possible cure.

CAPP in Action!

Boards Members and staff will be busy this summer. In June, we will be attending the [International Dermatology Patient organization Conference](#) in Vancouver, and in July, the [4th World Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis Conference](#) in Stockholm, Sweden.

Stay tuned for updates in our next newsletter.



CAPP is grateful to the following sponsors for supporting this newsletter. CAPP is an autonomous patient group and is solely responsible for this publication's content.



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