



EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF
DERMATOLOGY AND VENEREOLOGY

Information Leaflet for Patients

PSORIASIS AND INTIMACY

The aim of this leaflet

This leaflet is designed to help you understand more about how psoriasis can affect intimacy and your sex life, with tips you can follow to overcome any fears you may have about this.

PSORIASIS AND INTIMACY

How can you take (back) control over your sex life?

Psoriasis can strongly affect your sex life due to fear and shame. However, letting psoriasis ruin your sexual experience is a real shame; it's like admitting that psoriasis controls your life.

If you're afraid that your partner will be overwhelmed by your spots, talk to him/her before being intimate. That way, you're in control of the situation and you get to decide when to show the spots. Moreover, this will aid your partner in accepting your psoriasis and not see it as taboo. You may be conscious of the psoriatic lesions, especially in the pubic area, so it is important to take good care of your psoriasis.

It's mostly about taking control of the situation, which will help you feel more confident. Consider involving your partner in your skin care routine. This is also intimate and may lead to additional intimate moments with your partner.

Taking control of your psoriasis also includes controlling your thoughts. Don't let a negative thought ruin an intimate moment; focus on your partner instead. Breathing exercises can help you relax and increase your focus, which will help overcoming your fears.

Discuss your comfort zone with your partner; sex is an intimate experience and each person has his/her own array of comfort, with or without psoriasis. Discuss this in advance... It will help both of you to enjoy the moment to its fullest.

Should you have any other concerns, or you find yourself unable to let go of negative thoughts or fears, seek help from a sexologist. Don't wait around too long; as time goes by, it may become more difficult to overcome your fears.

What are some tips to overcome your fears including tips to care for psoriasis of the genital area?

When you feel ready to overcome your fears, you may want to use the following tips to set the mood: dimmed lights or candlelight will create an intimate atmosphere and make you feel more comfortable about revealing your body. Wearing undergarments may increase your confidence as well, but opt for 100% cotton to reduce the risk of feeling

itchy, and avoid synthetic fabrics altogether.

People with psoriasis may prefer cooling lubricants over warm ones to avoid irritation. If you're not sure if a lubricant will work for you, try it out first on your lower lip. It is thinner and more sensitive, and thus more likely to react similarly to the skin in your genital area.

If you suffer from psoriasis on your penis, opt for a condom with lubricant so your skin won't get irritated. If you experience erectile dysfunction, which may be linked to psoriasis, talk to your doctor about it. Women with insufficient vaginal discharge should not attribute this to psoriasis, but should nevertheless address this issue. Otherwise, sex will become painful. For example, a perfect solution is zinc oxide paste, which can be purchased over the counter at your local pharmacy. After an intimate moment, it is important to take the time to rinse your genitals and skin or skin folds and reapply topical (medicinal) creams/ointments afterwards. No matter how difficult the treatment is for lesions in your genital area, it is crucial that you follow the treatment as prescribed to achieve the best results and protect the sensitive skin.

Some may readily apply the tips above, but others may need more time. And that is just fine, because intimacy is more than having sex. It's enjoying each other's company and spending time together. But if you feel that being intimate is a big challenge, consult a sexologist. They will address your fears more effectively. Of course, it's up to you whether you involve your partner in this as well, but it will usually bring you closer together. ■

While every effort has been made to ensure that the information given in this leaflet is accurate, not every treatment will be suitable or effective for every person. Your own clinician will be able to advise in greater detail.

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