

# Managing Psoriatic Arthritis



## Managing Psoriatic Arthritis (PsA)

Early diagnosis and treatment of PsA is very important—any delay in care can result in permanent joint damage. Work closely with your doctor and health care team to make shared decisions about your treatment.<sup>1</sup>



**There are a variety of treatments available for PsA. Which treatment(s) is right for you may depend on several factors including<sup>2,3</sup>:**



How active your disease is



Any treatments that have or have not worked



The amount of joint damage, and which joints are affected



Any related diseases and conditions you may have



## Treatment Goals

The goals of treatment are to<sup>2,4</sup>:

- Slow or stop disease activity in all domains (subtypes)
- Help you maintain or regain your ability to perform day-to-day activities
- Improve your quality of life and well-being
- Help prevent or slow further joint damage

**Talk with your rheumatologist about your options and treatment goals.**



## Medicines

There is no cure for PsA, but there are many treatments to help manage the condition. Your treatment plan will depend on your symptoms and how active your PsA is.<sup>1</sup>

### For milder disease, treatment may include<sup>1</sup>:

- Over-the-counter nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) to treat pain and swelling.
- Injections of strong inflammation-fighting medicine, such as corticosteroids, into the affected joints to reduce swelling.

### For PsA that's more severe, treatment may include<sup>5</sup>:

- Disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDs). This type of medicine helps calm symptoms, prevents or slows joint damage, and may slow down the disease. There are three different types of DMARDs:
  - Conventional DMARDs
  - Biologic DMARDs
  - Targeted DMARDs

You may also need additional treatment depending on the PsA domains (subtypes) that are affecting you. For example, if you have the skin disease psoriasis, you may also be treated with<sup>2</sup>:

- Topical therapies: Creams or ointments that are applied to the skin.
- Phototherapy: A type of treatment that exposes your skin to ultraviolet light.



## Lifestyle Changes<sup>1,3</sup>

- **Protect your joints.** Being careful about the way you do daily tasks can protect your joints. For example, using a jar opener can put less strain on the fingers. Also, try pushing doors open with your whole body and not just your hands.
- **Be physically active.** Low impact exercises like swimming, walking, biking, yoga, and tai chi can help keep your joints flexible and your muscles strong while putting less stress on your joints. Always check with your doctor before starting any exercise program.
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Keeping your weight in a healthy range puts less strain on your joints and may help your treatment work better.
- **Quit smoking and limit alcohol use.** Smoking may make symptoms worse, and alcohol may cause your medication to not work as well.
- **Pace yourself.** Try to balance rest and activity— break up chores and exercise into short segments, and rest before you feel too tired. Take time to relax several times a day.



## Take Part in Managing Your PsA<sup>3</sup>



**Understand what triggers your symptoms** and learn ways you can avoid and reduce them.



**Be prepared for medical appointments.** Write down any questions or concerns you have or bring a friend to help you remember everything. Make a list of all the medicines you take.



**Work with your doctor to make shared decisions about your care.** Follow your treatment plan. If you feel something isn't working, let your doctor know.



## Get Support<sup>1,3</sup>

Dealing with PsA can be hard—both physically and emotionally. Support from your family and friends and others with PsA, can help you feel better and cope with any challenges you may have.

For resources, contact the National Psoriasis Foundation at [www.psoriasis.org](http://www.psoriasis.org)

### References:

1. National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Diseases, National Institutes of Health. Psoriatic arthritis. Reviewed March 2021. Accessed April 24, 2023. <https://www.niams.nih.gov/health-topics/psoriatic-arthritis>
2. Group for Research and Assessment of Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis. A patient's guide to treatments for psoriatic arthritis. Accessed April 24, 2023. [https://www.grappanetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/GRAPPA\\_PsA\\_Patients\\_Guide\\_to\\_Treatments\\_v1.1\\_\\_1\\_.pdf](https://www.grappanetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/GRAPPA_PsA_Patients_Guide_to_Treatments_v1.1__1_.pdf)
3. Mayo Clinic. Psoriatic arthritis diagnosis and treatment. Published October 2, 2021. Accessed April 24, 2023. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/psoriatic-arthritis/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20354081>
4. National Psoriasis Foundation. About psoriatic arthritis. Updated June 2, 2022. Accessed April 24, 2023. <https://www.psoriasis.org/about-psoriatic-arthritis>
5. Arthritis Foundation. The first medications for PsA. Accessed April 24, 2023. <https://www.arthritis.org/health-wellness/treatment/treatment-plan/disease-management/the-first-medications-for-psa>