

# Managing Your Psoriasis During the Covid-19 Pandemic



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Living with a chronic disease like Psoriasis has become even more challenging and stressful due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although it is not known with certainty that people with Psoriasis are at an increased risk of developing COVID-19<sup>1</sup>, it is important to be aware and alert.

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***We have created this toolkit with an aim to guide you through your Psoriasis journey, keeping in mind the current COVID-19 scenario.***

***You will find helpful tips and information to ease your way through this crisis and handle your condition better.***

# Managing Psoriasis During the Pandemic

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Psoriasis is a lifelong condition, but you can live well with Psoriasis even during the pandemic if you follow these simple tips:



Identify triggers



Track your symptoms



Connect with your Dermatologist



Adhere to your treatment plan

*The following pages will throw more light on each of these tips and will help you handle your condition better.*



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# Identify Your Triggers

Triggers are certain factors that can cause a sudden increase in symptoms.

## Common triggers



Stress



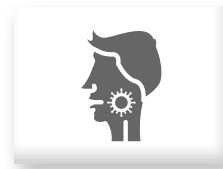
Weather changes



Starting or stopping medications



Alcohol and smoking



Infections



**Identifying your symptom triggers may help your Dermatologist in making the right treatment decisions**

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# Why Is Trigger Identification Important?

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Living with Psoriasis comes with a unique set of challenges which have a deep rooted impact on all aspects of life.<sup>1</sup>



## PHYSICAL IMPACT

Challenges of managing physical symptoms (scaling, itching, pain, bleeding).



## PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT

Visibility of lesions increase anxiety and stress.



## SOCIAL IMPACT

Symptoms may attract social stigma especially during flares.



Once you have identified your triggers, it is important that you **TRACK YOUR SYMPTOMS** regularly.<sup>1,2</sup>

# Track Your Symptoms

## Regular tracking of symptoms will:<sup>1,2</sup>

- Allow you to feel more in control of your condition.
- Act as an indicator to connect with your Dermatologist.

## Ways to track symptoms<sup>2-5</sup>



### DIGITAL CAMERA OR SMART PHONE

Ask a family member to click pictures of your lesions in day light. This will help understand the progress of your lesions.



### DAILY RECORD

Keep a daily record of what you eat, drink and stressful time (if any). This will help you identify the triggers of your flares.



### WEEKLY JOURNAL

Fix a day and time of the week to pen down the impact of psoriasis in your life. Compare this to your condition on the same day last week.



**CONNECT WITH YOUR DERMATOLOGIST if you experience any worsening of symptoms or have a negative impact of Psoriasis on your life**

# Tools to Track Your Symptoms and the Impact They Have on Your Life

Use these tools to understand the impact psoriasis has on you and have a meaningful dialogue with your Dermatologist:

Do-it-yourself  
Symptom Tracker

Dermatology Life Quality Index  
(DLQI) Score

## Do-it-yourself Symptom Tracker<sup>1,2</sup>

How would you rate your symptoms over the last week?



Less than  
before



Same as  
before



Worse than  
before

**Number of lesions**

**Thickness of lesions**

**Redness of lesions**

**Lesions feel itchy**

**Painful lesions**

**Flakes**



# Dermatology Life Quality Index (DLQI) Score

Patient-reported outcomes which are metrics that assess a patient's health status or quality of life [QoL] from the patient perspective are increasingly being used to assess the disease severity and to guide clinical care.

**DLQI is a validated and widely used dermatology-specific health-related quality of life [HRQoL] measure to assess the impact of the disease on the life of the patient.** DLQI is a simple practical ten-question questionnaire, that helps to assess the psychosocial influences that psoriasis might be having on you.<sup>1</sup> This might aid in having meaningful talks with your Dermatologist.

**To find out how Psoriasis has affected your life  
OVER THE LAST WEEK, please answer the following questions<sup>2</sup>**

Questions	Rating	Score
<b>1.</b> Over the last week, how itchy, sore, painful or stinging has your skin been?	3=Very much 2=A lot 1=A little 0=Not at all	
<b>2.</b> Over the last week, how embarrassed or self-conscious have you been because of your skin?	3=Very much 2=A lot 1=A little 0=Not at all	
<b>3.</b> Over the last week, how much has your skin interfered with you going shopping or looking after your home or garden?	3=Very much 2=A lot 1=A little 0=Not at all 0=Not relevant	
<b>4.</b> Over the last week, how much has your skin influenced the clothes you wear?	3=Very much 2=A lot 1=A little 0=Not at all 0=Not relevant	



Questions	Rating	Score
<p><b>5.</b> Over the last week, how much has your skin affected any social or leisure activities?</p>	<p>3=Very much 2=A lot 1=A little 0=Not at all 0=Not relevant</p>	
<p><b>6.</b> Over the last week, how much has your skin made it difficult for you to do any sport?</p>	<p>3=Very much 2=A lot 1=A little 0=Not at all 0=Not relevant</p>	
<p><b>7.</b> Over the last week, has your skin prevented you from working or studying? If "No", over the last week how much has your skin been a problem at work or studying?</p>	<p>3=Yes 2=A lot 1=A little 0=Not at all 0=Not relevant</p>	
<p><b>8.</b> Over the last week, how much has your skin created problems with your partner or any of your close friends or relatives?</p>	<p>3=Very much 2=A lot 1=A little 0=Not at all 0=Not relevant</p>	
<p><b>9.</b> Over the last week, how much has your skin caused any sexual difficulties?</p>	<p>3=Very much 2=A lot 1=A little 0=Not at all 0=Not relevant</p>	
<p><b>10.</b> Over the last week, how much of a problem has the treatment for your skin been, for example by making your home messy, or by taking up time?</p>	<p>3=Very much 2=A lot 1=A little 0=Not at all 0=Not relevant</p>	
	<p><b>Total</b></p>	

**Please check if you have answered EVERY question.  
It's important to answer EVERY question.**

## Find your score!

### Step 1

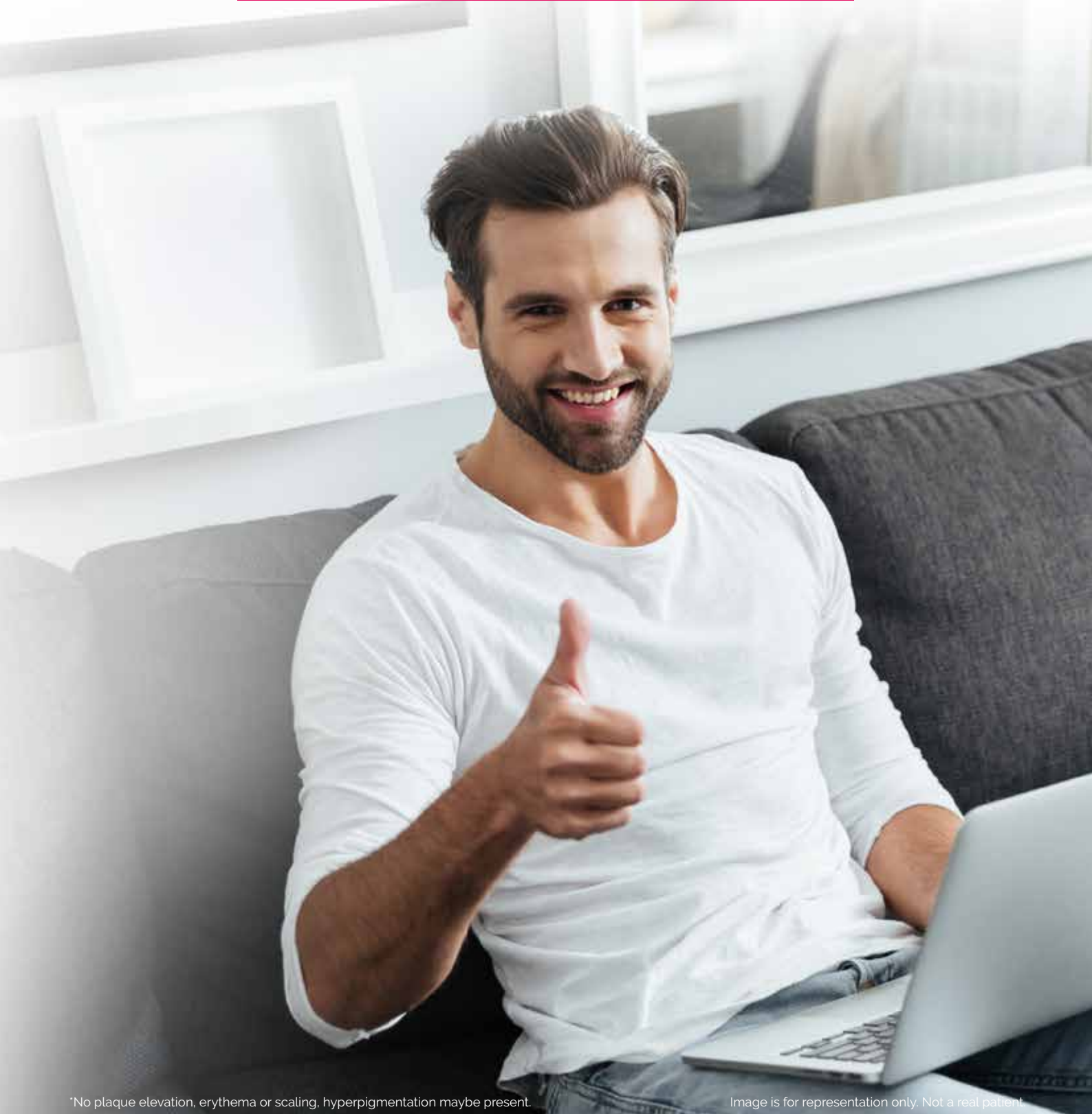
Sum the score of each question

### Step 2

Interpret your score as follows

Range	0 – 1	2 – 5	6 – 10	11 – 20	21 – 30
Indicates	No effect at all on your life	Small effect on your life	Moderate effect on your life	Very large effect on your life	Extremely large effect on your life

**Keep a track of your symptoms!  
Talk to your Dermatologist about  
biologics for clear\* skin**



\*No plaque elevation, erythema or scaling, hyperpigmentation maybe present.

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# Connect With Your Dermatologist

When living with a chronic disease like Psoriasis, it is important for you to stay in touch with your Dermatologist regularly.

## Connecting with your Dermatologist is important to ensure



Examination of symptoms



Frank conversations to resolve queries



Treatment continuation

## Ways to connect with your Dermatologist



Telemedicine consulting



Clinic visit

Your choice of connecting with your Dermatologist will depend on the prevalence of COVID-19 in your community/area and the traveling restrictions put in place by local authorities.

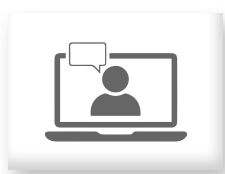
**Staying connected with your Dermatologist is the key to managing your condition better during the COVID-19 pandemic**

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# Consult Your Dermatologist: Telemedicine Consulting

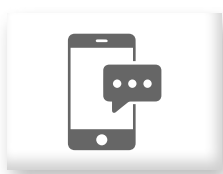
Telemedicine refers to consulting your Dermatologist **'virtually'**. This can be easily done using the various modes of online connection.<sup>1</sup>

Indian Association of Dermatologists, Venereologists and Leprologists (IADVL) recommend the following modes of telemedicine consultation:<sup>1</sup>



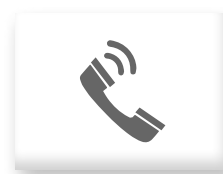
## Video

Skype, Facetime  
etc.



## Text

Chat, Whatsapp, Messenger,  
Email, Fax etc.



## Audio

Telephone call,  
etc.

## Getting the best out of your telemedicine consulting<sup>2</sup>



**Get in touch with your Dermatologist to book a telemedicine consultation.** Follow the instructions for booking an appointment



**Agree to the mode of consulting** which you and your Dermatologist are comfortable using. E.g., Video calling, texting, audio calling, etc.

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## Prepare for your consulting:



Write down your questions in advance



Keep your prescription list and symptom tracker handy



Be prepared with photographs of your lesions which you can send as a soft copy



Get familiar with your conferencing or calling platform.



Do not get distracted with your surroundings during your appointment.



Do not forget to schedule your next appointment.

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## Telemedicine consulting discussion guide



Am I at risk of developing COVID-19?

What should I do if I feel that I have contracted COVID-19?

What precautions should I take to reduce my risk?

Is it safe to come to the clinic for a visit?

What should I do if I experience flare-ups?

How can I manage my condition at home?

Telemedicine consulting works best for routine periodic visits or follow-up visits. It helps you stay connected with your Dermatologist and gives you an opportunity to clear doubts and raise concerns about your health.<sup>3</sup>

### REMEMBER

Not every symptom of Psoriasis can be dealt with over the phone. You may have to visit your Dermatologist's clinic if you are having flare-ups, or you notice new or changing symptoms.

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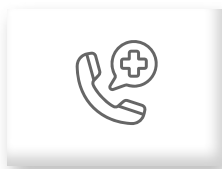


## Consult Your Dermatologist: Clinic Visits

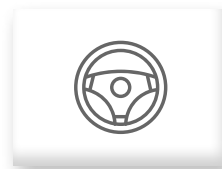
You may have to visit your Dermatologist in-person especially if you are experiencing severe or new symptoms that require an examination.

### Here are a few pointers to help you 'Stay Safe' while visiting your Dermatologist

#### Prepare for your appointment



Take an appointment in advance.



Decide on how you would be travelling.



Write down a list of questions you would like to discuss.

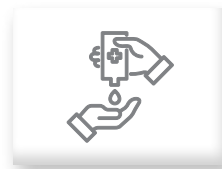
#### Carry with you



Your current medication list



Symptom tracker and DLQI score sheets



Alcohol-based hand sanitiser



Extra masks and gloves

## Ensure safety measures while travelling for your appointment



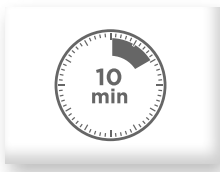
Have a family member or a trusted friend drive you to the clinic if possible. If you choose to hire a cab, follow the rules set by the local authorities on number of travellers per vehicle, use of masks, etc.



Sanitise the car handles, windows and seats.



Ensure personal safety (use masks, gloves).



Arrive at least 10 minutes before your scheduled appointment.

## Points to remember while at the clinic

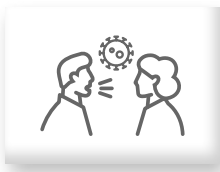
Be prepared for a change in protocols during your visit. You are requested to comply with clinic requirements to ensure your safety.



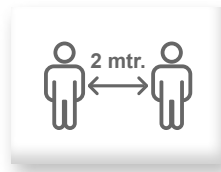
Temperature checks.



Mandatory use of gloves and mask.



Queries regarding contact with a COVID-19 positive person.



Social distancing while standing in queues or sitting in waiting areas.

## While at the clinic



Use a hand sanitiser often.



Limit your conversation with the staff.



Avoid touching frequently touched surfaces like railings, door knobs and handles.

**Adhering to safety rules laid down by World Health Organisation (WHO), American Dermatology Association and rules enforced at the clinic will help you stay safe**

## Your Dermatologist is concerned about your safety

Regulatory bodies like the American Dermatology Association have set up patient safety guidelines.

Dermatologists are ensuring that their clinics maintain hygiene standards at all times by putting in place the following protocols.



Continuous sanitising of frequently touched surfaces like door knobs and hand rails.



Providing all staff members with disposal masks, gloves, etc.

**Balance your safety concerns with the need to visit your Dermatologist**

# Adhere to the Treatment Plan

Living with Psoriasis has its own set of unique challenges, which may become more pronounced in the wake of the pandemic.

Although there is no cure for Psoriasis, but there are safe and effective treatment options that will help you achieve relief from symptoms.<sup>1</sup>



Be assured, your Dermatologist is the best judge to decide about treatment continuation.



Do not alter or discontinue your treatment regime without consulting your Dermatologist.

## Discuss your concerns

It is important that you discuss your queries, concerns and fears with your Dermatologist before making any changes, or before delaying or stopping your treatment.

### Pointers on discussing your treatment during the pandemic

- Can I continue my medication even during the pandemic?
- Does my medication increase my risk of contracting COVID-19?
- Can I take my injectable medication at home?
- Can I continue my medication if my family member or neighbour is COVID-19 positive?

**Talk to your Dermatologist about biologics for clear\* skin**

\*No plaque elevation, erythema or scaling, hyperpigmentation maybe present.

# Managing Psoriasis at Home

Coping with the symptoms of Psoriasis involves medication and lifestyle changes which includes a skin care routine.

Here are a few tips to help you cope better:



## DAILY BATHS

Spending at least 15 minutes in a warm bath, gently rubbing your skin with gentle soaps or scrubs will help.<sup>1</sup>



## MOISTURISING

Use moisturisers prescribed by your Dermatologist to help your skin heal better.<sup>1</sup>



## WORK ON YOUR TRIGGERS

Stress is considered to be one of the major triggers of Psoriasis<sup>1</sup>. Stress has become a part of our daily lives and the pandemic has only added to the stress levels

### DID YOU KNOW?

High stress levels can trigger severe Psoriasis flare-ups<sup>2</sup>



Understanding and managing stress is therefore, an important life-skill for you<sup>2</sup>

**Meditation and physical exercise can help you manage your stress better<sup>2</sup>**

## Other lifestyle changes you can adopt<sup>1</sup>

- Eat a healthy, balanced diet.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Get regular exercise.
- Sleep well.
- Avoid smoking and alcohol.



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# COVID-19 and Psoriasis: Points to Remember

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**Do not alter or discontinue your treatment regime without consulting your Dermatologist.**



**Connect with your Dermatologist immediately if you notice any of the following:**

- A change in symptoms.
- An increase in symptoms (flare-up).
- Any COVID-19 like symptoms.



**Connect with your Dermatologist if you have any of the following queries:**

- You want to stop/change/delay your treatment.
- You want to know your risk of developing COVID-19.
- You want to schedule an appointment.



**Continue to maintain a connect with your Dermatologist to ensure continuity of treatment and to take control of Psoriasis.**



# UNHIDE PSORIASIS

**Talk to your Dermatologist  
about biologics for clear\* skin**

**For more information log on to  
[www.unhidepsoriasis.com](http://www.unhidepsoriasis.com)**

\*No plaque elevation, erythema or scaling, hyperpigmentation maybe present.

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