What Are the Key Links Between Aging and Psoriasis?

by LARA WYATT

Does Psoriasis Get Worse With Age?

If you suffer with flare-ups of psoriasis, I have some good news for you. To answer the question “does psoriasis get worse with age?”, you will be happy to find that psoriasis is not a condition that is medically determined to get worse with age. Despite this, there is still a connection between psoriasis and age, and the events and experiences people go through at different stages of their lives. Some people may discover that as they get older they may experience the same amount of, or more, flare-ups due to the changes in their lifestyle.

Psoriasis can impact someone’s life at any age, but it is most commonly developed between the ages of 15 and 35. It’s an autoimmune skin condition that sees the rapid production of skin cells, causing inflammation, redness, and flaky plaques of skin. There are many different types of psoriasis with different configurations and symptoms that can appear anywhere on the body. There’s no one size fits all approach to treating psoriasis and there is no definitive answer as to what causes it. So, with this in mind, how can we determine its connection with age?

The Connection Between Psoriasis and Age

Although there is no set-in-stone cause for psoriasis, research suggests that there may be a connection between the onset of psoriasis before the age of 40 and the presence of several specific genes. They mention that psoriasis onset is reported prior to the age of 40 in around 75% of sufferers. They also mention that late onset of psoriasis may impact those who are 60 years and older. No doubt, genes play a part in those who suffer from psoriasis, as there is research to suggest that having a family member who suffers from the condition can increase your chances of also developing psoriasis. However, other factors that occur throughout a person’s life may make it appear as though psoriasis is directly related to age. These can include all the environmental factors and life events a person goes through as they get older.

Environmental Factors and Life Events

As we get older, we encounter arguably more stressful situations. Our jobs, money and savings for retirement, and worrying about our family members and their wellbeing may be stressful. Having concerns playing in the back of your mind all the time can certainly have an impact on our health, and psoriasis is triggered by stress, which means we may see more frequent psoriasis flare-ups as we get older.

Another factor to take into consideration when assessing psoriasis getting worse with age is our lifestyle and diet habits. As adults we have more autonomy over making decisions about what we consume, how much we consume, and other lifestyle choices. These choices can catch up to us as we age. Obesity, or being overweight, is a trigger for psoriasis, as is alcohol, smoking, and a less-than-deal diet. As we get older, our gut struggles to digest processed foods we may have always used to eat, which can lead to digestive problems, leading to a strong connection to psoriasis flare-ups.

There’s also the fact that as we age, so does our skin. It becomes more fragile as we get older, and a slight

bump here and there can break the skin and cause trauma a lot easier. Psoriasis is a condition that can be triggered by broken skin, so as you age, fragile skin is more prone to bumps and grazes. It may seem like psoriasis is getting worse as we get older, when in fact the triggers are becoming more frequent.

So, with all of this in mind, how can those suffering from psoriasis as they get older manage their symptoms and cope with flare-ups?

Managing Psoriasis as You Age

The first thing to implement into your daily routine is a skincare routine. Keeping your skin moisturized and hydrated is key to ensuring dry skin does not crack and trigger a flare-up. There's also a suggestion that retinol may be a good option to incorporate into your skincare routine. It's used as a psoriasis treatment but can be found in several cosmetic products that you can buy over the counter. Do note that retinol can cause inflammation for those with sensitive skin.

If you smoke, quit. Smoking is a key contributor to psoriasis flare-ups, so this is one factor you can control towards managing the skin condition. Quitting smoking is not easy, but there are many great resources and groups out there to help. Talk to your doctor and they will be able to advise the best course of action for you.

If you are someone who loves to be outside in nature, make sure you wear sunscreen — even on cloudy days. Sun-damaged skin is a key trigger for psoriasis flare-ups, so keeping your skin protected is essential to slow the damage to your skin and reduce those outbreaks. An SPF 30 is a good sunscreen to incorporate into your daily routine, and if you wear makeup you can often find a foundation that incorporates it.

An Overview

Although the worsening of psoriasis is not directly connected with age, the lifestyle changes and events we go through during the course of our lives can give the impression that it does. The key takeaway is to take care of your skin, maintain a healthy lifestyle, and if a flare-up should take place, try your best not to stress (as this will make it worse). Implement your psoriasis flare-up regimen to bring it under control. Be sure to talk to your doctor about your options.