



EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF  
DERMATOLOGY AND VENEREOLOGY

# Information Leaflet for Patients

## ACCEPTING PSORIASIS

### The aim of this leaflet

*This leaflet is designed to help you understand more about accepting psoriasis, but not give up or give in to it. It tells you about the importance of joining a patient support group, why you don't need to feel ashamed or shy about your psoriasis lesions, and why you need to take good care of yourself.*

# ACCEPTING PSORIASIS

## Why accept psoriasis?

Psoriasis is a heavy burden, but luckily you don't have to be alone to bear it; everyone in your support network (your partner, family, friends, doctor, etc.) can support you through the tough moments. Therefore, it is important not to treat psoriasis as a taboo. Try to be open to discussing your psoriasis and the associated worries. Acceptance is important, but it doesn't mean that you need to give in to psoriasis! Accepting psoriasis means that you organize your skin care into your daily routine. Acceptance is also avoiding injuries. Moreover, acceptance doesn't mean to give up looking for the right treatment; it's accepting that some treatments will work and others won't. Accepting psoriasis doesn't mean you're not following your dreams because of psoriasis, but instead that you will try to live to the maximum with psoriasis. In other words, acceptance is an attitude and it's up to you to have a positive or negative attitude towards psoriasis.

## Can acceptance come from joining a patient association?

First of all, accepting a disease is not easy and may require time, energy, and courage. This is where a support group may come to the rescue: sharing your experiences with people who understand exactly what you're going through is a very powerful tool towards acceptance. Moreover, these are often experienced people and they may give you some solutions to everyday problems that you encounter, including practical solutions your physician doesn't even know about! Acceptance can come through realizing that you're more than a person with psoriasis, which will be obvious when surrounded by different and unique personalities in such a support group. Although all members will be unique and have their own set of experiences, values such as optimism, determination, openness, and pragmatism are key in a support group and are essential in a life with or without psoriasis!

Many people will wait before joining a support group as they may feel that this means giving up the fight against psoriasis. Yet, many admit that this has helped them accept and better control psoriasis. Look for a regional or national support group for people with psoriasis and join today!

## Do you feel shy or embarrassed?

For many people, the worst thing about psoriasis is shame, and therefore they choose to hide the spots. This can be tiresome and give you a sense of being a slave to psoriasis, especially during summertime when you don't feel like wearing short sleeves or shorts. Yet, once you've accepted psoriasis and you stop hiding it, you will feel more free. Furthermore, other people will finally understand the mystery of why you were wearing sweaters during summertime! If you have psoriasis, you don't have to hide it; just like you don't have to hide a cold.

Are you still worried that people will look at you? Most often, we imagine that people look at us if we are conscious of how we look, especially if you have a skin disease. Yet, it's possible that people look at you because you are wearing a cute pair of shoes or because you're wearing the same sweater as their brother was wearing last Christmas. You may look at people as well, without being judgmental - we all do it. And even some people look at your spots, yet it has luckily never led to more spots on the spot. In such cases, you can actually make use of the situation and educate people about psoriasis, as in what it is or what it isn't (e.g. it's not contagious). So, try not to be embarrassed, because it does not have

to be embarrassing. Next time it's a sunny day, make sure to wear short sleeves or a skirt/shorts and a funny hat or sunglasses. That way, it will be impossible to tell if they're looking at you because of your spots or the funny accessories. Build up your confidence in small steps, since you deserve to live as freely as anyone else!

### **Acceptance: why admit that you need care?**

Finally, acceptance is admitting to yourself that you have a chronic illness and that you need to take good care of yourself. Admitting this to yourself and your environment may be a difficult task, but pride will not save your body from the chronic inflammation of psoriasis. Your body is giving a clear signal that it needs more care. Therefore, try to: accept that you have your own unique rhythm, accept that you may require treatment, accept that you may need another coping strategy for stress, and accept help from other people. Accepting you need care will give you more energy to actually take care of yourself and get better. ■

