



PENINSULA
DERMATOLOGY
and laser clinic

Psoriasis

What is psoriasis? Psoriasis is a chronic inflammatory condition characterized by inflamed, red, often raised and scaly areas caused by the body making skin cells too quickly. The skin cells pile up and form patches or spots on the skin. Psoriasis can be associated with psoriatic arthritis. It is not contagious.

These medications are often used to treat psoriasis:

Steroid creams or ointments. These are put on the skin to help ease inflammation, thickness, scaling, and itching. Many topical steroids are available in different strengths. If overused, they can cause skin thinning and discoloration, but if used within guidelines they are safe.

Your provider has ordered:

_____ this is a low potency steroid that is safe to be used in face/armpits/groin for up to three weeks at a time as needed followed by one week of rest.

_____ this is a mid-potency steroid that is safe to use on larger areas of the body twice daily for up to three weeks at a time followed by one week of rest.

_____ this is a high potency steroid used for difficult to treat smaller areas of the body and can be used for up to three weeks at a time followed by one week of rest.

Coal tar: an age old treatment. Coal tar is found both in over the counter and prescriptions products and can help with itch, scale, and difficult to treat areas such as scalp, palms, and soles. Prescription tar must come from a compounding pharmacy and you will pay out of pocket as it is not covered by insurance.

Your provider would like you to purchase/has ordered:

_____ this product can be used on scalp and body (not for face/armpit/groin), and can be left on or washed off as indicated. For example, tar can be used and left on overnight, with a topical steroid used in the same area in the morning.

Vitamin D analogues/synthetic vitamin D:

These topical medications can slow rapidly dividing skin cells, flatten thick psoriasis, remove scale, improve nail and scalp psoriasis. Using both synthetic vitamin D and a topical steroid tends to be more effective than using either medication alone.

Your provider has ordered:

_____ this product can be used in all areas twice daily (however can cause irritation if used in sensitive areas such as face and groin). This products does not cause thinning of the skin.

Topical calcinuerin inhibitors:

The FDA approved these medications to treat eczema, however they can be safely and effectively used “off-label” to treat psoriasis. As it is “off-label”, it can be difficult to get insurance to approve the medication. Possible side effects of the medications include burning and or itching sensation. This tends to disappear as you use the medicine or as the psoriasis clears.

Your provider has ordered:

_____ this product can be used in all areas, including sensitive areas such as face and genitals, twice daily.

Aryl hydrocarbon receptor agonist: Vtama (tapinarof)

This medicine helps reduce inflammation and normalize skin barrier. It can be used long-term on sensitive skin areas such as face and groin. It can take longer to clear psoriatic plaques when compared to topical steroids, however once clear using the medication, some patients might remain clear for many months.

Your provider has ordered:

_____ This product can be used once daily in all areas.

Topical PDE4 inhibitor:

This medicine blocks an enzyme that plays a role in causing inflammation. It is put on the skin, often twice a day.

Your provider has ordered:

_____ to be applied to affected areas twice daily.

Ultraviolet (UV) light therapy: Light therapy uses UV light of certain wavelengths to target the immune system. It stops the responses that lead to inflammation. Phototherapy may be used along with other treatment. Phototherapy is at least twice weekly commitment with visits occurring at the Tacoma and Silverdale offices only. There are risks and benefits of light therapy. Weigh these with your health provider.

Systemic Therapy: There are also a variety of systemic (not topical) medications, both oral and injectable, that can be used to treat resistant or wide-spread psoriasis. Some of these medications can help with psoriatic arthritis as well. There are risks and benefits with these medications. Some of these options are very effective, allowing many patients relief from topical regimens. If you are interested in systemic therapy, please reach out to your health provider.