Psoriasis

The Conventional Way

Try a topical cream first for mild to moderate psoriasis. It will help to moisturise the skin and alleviate dryness.

The most common are corticosteroids, which work by reducing inflammation, slowing the production of skin cells and relieving itching.

Then try medication Drugs can do anything from reducing the turnover of skin cells to suppressing the immune system. Some new biological drugs with milder side effects are being developed,' says consultant dermatologist Dr Adam Friedmann (theharleystreetskincareclinic.co.uk). 'For instance, Secukinumab has been licensed in the US and is being trialled in the UK.'

Give phototherapy a go Precise doses of ultraviolet light are applied to the affected skin to suppress inflammation. Available on the NHS (expect a 12-week wait) or privately (£100–£180 for twice weekly sessions, depending on the type of therapy required).

See a dermatologist Ask your GP for a referral or make an appointment privately. A skin expert will be able to advise on all of the above treatments.

The Complementary Way

Try a natural cream Regular use of prescribed creams containing steroids and chemicals can lead to skin thinning and further inflammation. Try Skin Salvation Intensive Moisturising Ointment (£12.99 from Holland & Barrett). Alternatively, Skin Balm (£13.99 from whatskinneeds.co.uk) contains active plant extract Plantolin to soothe, renew and protect.

Make lifestyle changes 'Alcohol, smoking and stress all impact on skin health. Drink lots of water, eat a well-balanced diet, and moisturise regularly,' says Natalie Balmont, creator of PurePotions (purepotions.co.uk).

Take a supplement A recent study found that people with psoriasis may be deficient in vitamin D, and taking supplements can help. Try Quest’s ForteD400 (£12.19 for two months’ supply at questexcellence.com). A separate study found that pycnogenol, an extract from French maritime pine tree bark, significantly improves the symptoms of psoriasis, including redness, flaking, thickness and area of affected skin. Try Pycnogenol (£13.99 for 30 capsules from Holland & Barrett).

How The Experts Keep Healthy

Dr Adam Carey, nutritionist and CEO of Core performance (coreperformance.co.uk), reveals how he boosts his health and wellbeing.

What's in your medicine cabinet? I keep a variety of medicines for week expeditions to the North and South Poles and Africa to support elite athletes. But, for home use, there are only a few plasters and some paracetamol in my medicine cabinet.

What's good in your fridge? Organic seasonal vegetables, meat and fish. As a family, we tend to cook from scratch. We also have full-fat milk and butter, together with some French cheese. I don't think low-fat products are healthy. I also drink a whey protein dairy drink called Upbeat (£3.75 for 250ml from leading supermarkets) because it fills me up and aids recovery after training.

What's your favourite exercise? I love skiing and wind or kite surfing. I also cycle a lot and have quite a few bits of equipment that allow me to train at home.

What's a special treat? For me it’s always activity-based rather than food- or drink-based. Skiing, sailing, climbing or riding a bike. A childhood remedy you still use? 'To get rid of warts, lick them daily until they disappear.'

Not As Good As You Think

Two-for-one offers on food

Every week, families throw away enough food to make six meals, according to a damning report into waste. Half the UK’s food waste occurs in the home, with the average household throwing away £250 to £400-worth a year. Don't be swayed by eye-catching offers, only buy what you need and learn more about use-by and best-before dates at nhs.uk and food.gov.uk, so you're not throwing away edible food just because of a date stamp.
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