

# How Psoriasis Changes as Women Age



Here's what women can expect from psoriasis at different points in their life

The effects of psoriasis change throughout a woman's lifespan. Many experts think **hormones** trigger immune system changes in the skin of women with psoriasis, so symptoms may get worse or better at certain times in your life.



## Here's what you can expect.

### Puberty

Around ages 7-13, your body starts making sex hormones, such as estrogen and progesterone.

These hormones may play a role in **inflammation and affect the immune system**, causing psoriasis to appear or flare (get worse).

### Periods

The first time you get your period, high levels of estrogen can cause the overproduction of certain skin cells, which can make psoriasis worse.

Hormone levels go up and down during your menstrual cycle, so your psoriasis may flare or get better at different times of the month.

Many women say their psoriasis gets worse **right before their period**, when estrogen levels are low. Symptoms might get better during the middle of your cycle, when estrogen levels are highest.



### Pregnancy

During pregnancy, your body produces high levels of estrogen and other hormones that may provide a temporary break from psoriasis symptoms.

**9 out of 10** In one **study** of women with psoriasis, nearly 9 out of 10 saw their skin get better or stabilize during pregnancy.

**2 out of 3** Another **study** found that over half of women said their symptoms got better during pregnancy, but 2 out of 3 said their psoriasis got worse after giving birth.

After pregnancy, hormone levels return to normal — so your psoriasis may flare up again.

If you're taking medication to treat your psoriasis, it's important to talk with your care team as soon as you start thinking about having a baby. Certain drugs **need to be stopped several months** before you become pregnant.

### Menopause

During **perimenopause**, the time when a woman's body starts making the transition toward menopause, hormonal ups and downs — particularly dropping estrogen levels — may make psoriasis worse.

In a study of menopausal women with psoriasis, nearly half said going through menopause **made their condition worse**, and only 2% showed improvement.



### Managing hormone-related flares

If your psoriasis is getting worse and you suspect hormones may be to blame, talk to a healthcare provider who understands how hormones affect your condition.

Together, you can discuss treatment options, such as medication that may help ease flares, no matter where you are in your life.