

**NAVIGATING YOUR PSORIASIS**

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7 Online Dating Tips for People with Psoriasis



Medically reviewed by [Janet Brito, Ph.D., LCSW, CST](#) — Written by Jenna Glatzer on November 12, 2021

Online dating starts with one thing: a picture. A two-dimensional representation of yourself that acts as your lure. Dating apps are inherently weighted toward physical appearance when you're encouraged to swipe left or right at first sight.

When you have a visible skin condition like psoriasis, online dating can introduce some tricky questions: Do you show it in your photos? Do you mention it — and if so, when? How do you address it if you have lesions showing on your first date?

While there's no one-size-fits-all response to these questions, I've rounded up a few people who have generously shared their experiences. Learning what's worked for them might help you decide what feels right to you.

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1. Jump in when you're ready

Especially if you've recently received your diagnosis, it can be hard to put yourself out there knowing that some people may judge you by your

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There will be plenty of others who won't pass judgement. If you're ready to meet someone, don't let psoriasis stop you from signing up for dating apps. There are lots of people with psoriasis who've met their significant others online, so why not you?

2. Know what you're looking for

Jassem "Jas" Ahmed, 30, received a diagnosis of plaque psoriasis at 19 years old.

At first, he said, he overcompensated by becoming more sexually active to prove to himself that women were still interested in him. He soon discovered, though, that in person the condition was rarely a concern.

Ahmed also started to realize that one-night stands weren't satisfying to him. He wanted something more meaningful, which meant opening up to a deeper connection.

Then he met Serena. She accepts that Ahmed has severe psoriasis flares that leave him bed-bound for months at a time. During those times, she's his caretaker as much as she is his partner.

Before meeting Serena, Ahmed didn't know that kind of love was possible. Now the two are engaged.

At different stages in life, you may be looking for different things. It's valid to search online for whatever suits you right now, whether that's a purely physical relationship, an emotional connection without sexual involvement, or anything in between.

Psoriasis can add sexual roadblocks if you have genital pain or itching or just a generally bad flare that's making you uncomfortable or not "in the mood."

But that doesn't mean you have to go without love. Know that there are people who will be accepting of that or even prefer a less sexually charged relationship.

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3. Choose your profile picture wisely

Some people with psoriasis suggest using pictures in your profile or in chats that show your lesions. Maybe not your worst flare, but something — just so it's not a surprise later.

Ahmed said that he always used to send photos of a bad flare to a prospective date via chat before meeting in person.

“One of two things would happen,” he said. “Either they would look and then block me, or they’d write back, ‘Oh, that looks so painful. You OK?’ The moment they responded back, I’d know I hadn’t scared them away, and I could say, ‘I’m OK. I don’t look anything like this right now, but sometimes it gets like this.’”

He said there was about a 50/50 shot of either response, but to him, that was a good time saver: Why not narrow it down to just those who might be real matches?

Do what's comfortable for you. If you want to choose only photos where your psoriasis isn't showing, it's fine to address it in person instead, on a need-to-know basis.

4. Bring it up first

It can be awkward to bring up psoriasis before anyone's even noticed it. But that might be the best time to get it out of the way — both for their peace of mind *and* yours.

If you have visible psoriasis, don't wait for your date to stare (or try *not* to stare) or ask any questions that may hurt you. Stories about someone making an ignorant or hurtful comment at a vulnerable moment are nearly a rite of passage when it comes to living with psoriasis.

You may be able to save yourself from that by giving them a quick run-down of what psoriasis is and assuring them it's not contagious.

5. ...Or leave it for later

They've since moved to France together, and they have two kids.

"I don't know how much information you need to give up front," said Rozenberg. "Let them get to know you first. If you bring it up like it's a negative and like it's a big deal, then they may think in the back of their mind, 'Maybe I should think this is a problem.'"

She said psoriasis has never been a big deal in her relationships. She believes it's just a piece of who she is, no different from her hair color. She doesn't let anyone make her feel bad about it.

Melissa Crawford, 43 years old, also said she doesn't put much focus on her psoriasis. She has let her dates know what's going on, but doesn't feel the need to talk much about it.

"For those who are freaked out about it, best you find out sooner rather than later," said Crawford. "If they are going to act childish about something you can't control, they don't deserve a second thought."

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6. Prepare for some ignorance, and some understanding

We still have a way to go when it comes to educating people about psoriasis and gaining acceptance.

Michelle Lee, 24 years old, had reached the final audition for the reality show "Love Island" when her psoriasis flared. Producers had been excited to have her on the show.

"I honestly thought they would use it as a platform, like 'We accept all sorts of people.' But they completely just rejected me," she said. "It wasn't

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Soon after that, she was on a beach trip with friends when a person who had consumed too much alcohol said, “Oh my God, is that [expletive] herpes?”

Lee ran off in tears, but her story didn’t end there. A man named Nikita, who was on the trip with her friends, pulled her aside. He told her, “You’re beautiful. Don’t worry about idiots who don’t know what psoriasis is.”

Three years later, they’re still together.

7. Work on self-love

Linzi, a 36-year-old married mom and teacher in Scotland, believes successful dating comes down to where you are mentally on your psoriasis journey. For her, it’s about “having the confidence and self-esteem to find someone who accepts you as you are, especially during a flare or at your worst with your psoriasis.”

She thinks someone’s reaction to the news that you have psoriasis “might be a very good test of a person’s character,” and could reveal what they will or won’t share about their own vulnerabilities.

The takeaway

Ultimately, how you feel about yourself radiates outward. Your character and worth have nothing to do with your skin, and anyone worth dating will recognize that.



Jenna Glatzer, who has inverse psoriasis, is a celebrity ghostwriter and author with more than 30 published books. Her books cover a wide array of topics, such as sleep disorders, fertility, bullying, business leadership, childhood obesity, and true crime. She’s also written for The Washington Post, Parents, Mic, HuffPost, Writer’s Digest, and many others. She lives with her daughter and a vaguely obnoxious leopard gecko in New York.

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