

In This Issue...

Pain Consultation

My Skin and Bones

SKIN CANADA

COVID-19 Response



The Canadian Association of Psoriasis Patients is working hard to ensure that the psoriasis community has access to the resources it needs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the situation evolves, CAPP will ensure that our community is getting the most accurate and up-to-date information about risks and impacts of COVID-19 on our community's access to care and treatment. We are sharing credible and appropriate information with our patients and others in our network of clinicians, researchers, patient organizations and other collaborators using social media and other avenues.

We continue to keep in touch with dermatologists and patients across the country to better understand the implications of virtual care, access to treatments and other health products, and public health measures to prevent the spread of the virus to vulnerable people, such as the patients in our community.

In order to respond to questions from the community, CAPP is collaborating with its partner organization, the Canadian Skin Patient Alliance (CSPA). Through this process, we are also working closely with dermatologists and researchers to understand the available evidence and identify potential research questions going forward. CSPA is consulting with its Medical Advisory Board and other experts to answer frequently asked questions. We have reproduced one FAQ related to psoriasis below – [check out others on CSPA's website](#).

Q. I am taking immunosuppressive medications - am I at higher risk for coronavirus? Should I stop taking them?

A. The Canadian Dermatology Association has provided specific guidance for skin patients who are taking medications that affect the immune system. The risks for patients depend on which medication they are taking. Specifically, they note that if you are taking one of the following, you may need to discuss their use during the COVID-19 pandemic with your dermatologist:

- Azathioprine
- Cyclosporine
- Cellcept/MMF
- Prednisone
- Methotrexate (depending on the dose)
- TNF-alpha inhibitor: infliximab, adalimumab, etanercept or certolizumab
- IL-12/23 inhibitor: ustekinumab

Patients who have been prescribed medications that affect their immune system should have received information from their dermatologist about the risks of infection when taking these medications and what to do in the case of an infection.

However, there are also risks associated with stopping these medications, including triggering a flare and/or not recapturing the same success if the medication is restarted later on. At this time, the best information we have suggests that, in general, patients do not stop the medication unless they develop symptoms of an infection - any infection. If you are worried that this might be your situation, please contact your treating physician to discuss the best plan for you.

Ultimately, the best thing that people can do is protect themselves against becoming infected with COVID-19. Patients taking systemic immunosuppressant medication, including biologics, should be very vigilant in following the recommendations of the Public Health Agency of Canada, particularly regarding hand washing, avoiding touching your face, cleaning often-used surfaces, and avoiding public spaces with crowds and individuals with flu symptoms or recent travel history. Your provincial or territorial government will also have its own guidance and make specific resources available to you. It is also important that those living with people taking biologics are also vigilant to reduce the risk of becoming infected.

Dermatologists and other physicians are considering whether to start new patients on systemic immunosuppressant medications or modify treatment schedules. Please consult your dermatologist or other specialist for details about your care.

Do you Follow Us?



Drug Shortage Survey

In light of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, the Canadian Skin Patient Alliance is looking to gather information on drug availability. So if you are having difficulty getting the drugs that you rely on to treat your psoriasis or psoriatic arthritis, [take this short quiz](#) and let us know.



Share your experiences and we will use this information to better understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on skin patients access to treatments in Canada.

My Skin and Bones

We launched the My Skin and Bones website to raise awareness of the connection between your skin and your joints. In fact if you have psoriasis, you have a 1 in 3 chance of developing psoriatic arthritis, so it is important to understand your risks and to be regularly checking for the signs of psoriatic arthritis.

Early detection of psoriatic arthritis is critical to ensure that treatment is started early. If psoriatic arthritis is left untreated, it can cause severe permanent joint damage. So one thing you can do if you are living with psoriasis is check your joints regularly - the My Skin and Bones website even has a handy calendar tool that will send you a reminder every three months to check in with your doctor if you are experiencing any of the signs of PsA, and it even lists them out for you.

So if you aren't sure of the signs of PsA and what you should be watching for, be sure to check out [My Skin and Bones](#) and make the connection between your skin and your joints!



Pain Consultation

Approximately 1 in 5 Canadians live with chronic pain which can have a significant impact on not only their physical well being but also on their mental health, often affecting their daily activities. The Canadian Pain Task Force is leading a national consultation whose aim is to better understand and address the needs of the millions of Canadians who live with pain.

If you want to help shape a report to Health Canada that will provide advice on evidence and best practices for the prevention and management of chronic pain, then [take the survey and share your experiences](#).

SKIN Canada



Are you interested in how research questions are chosen, how research is done and how patients can contribute to research?

CAPP's partner organization, the [Canadian Skin Patient Alliance \(CSPA\)](#) has launched a [Call for Expressions of Interest](#) for the 14 Patient Research Partner roles in the Skin Investigation Network of Canada (SKIN Canada). There are at least two Patient Research Partner roles on the Inflammatory Skin Disease Working Group.

SKIN Canada is excited to welcome Patient Research Partners to shape how research on skin diseases will be fostered across Canada. This is different from being a research subject. A research subject participates in research by agreeing to be part of an experiment whereas a Patient Research Partner :

- Works with researchers to help them understand patient perspectives as they build research networks
- Creates and designs biobanks
- Organizes clinical trials for skin diseases
- Trains students and early career researchers to work with patients and on issues that are important to patients, and
- Helps share the results of research with patients and the public.

Training will be provided. You don't have to know everything about how research works in order to make a valuable contribution!

If you are interested in participating, [please fill out this questionnaire by April 30, 2020](#).

CAPP is grateful for the support of our sponsors for making this newsletter possible.



Canadian Association of Psoriasis Patients
223 Colonnade Rd S, Unit 111 • Ottawa • ON • K2E 7K3
www.canadianpsoriasis.ca • 613-224-4266 • info@canadianpsoriasis.ca

