

## **PSORIASIS AND HEART HEALTHY**

As a physician, I have always tried to treat your psoriasis with the best therapy for your individual situation. In addition I am also concerned about all my patients general well being and health. It has been well known for many years that heart disease and heart attacks have been linked to a variety of medical conditions and risk factors including diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, high cholesterol, and smoking.

In addition to these, recent studies have shown that severe psoriasis may be an independent risk factor for heart disease and heart attacks. This essentially means that an otherwise healthy person with severe psoriasis may have a slightly higher risk of having heart disease or a heart attack than an average person in the general population.

At this point in time it is uncertain whether the treatment of psoriasis eliminates this slightly higher risk of having heart disease. This often leads patients to ask me the question, “what can I do to decrease my risk of having heart disease”?

For patients with psoriasis it becomes even more important to focus on decreasing risk factors that we know for sure, if kept in check, will decrease the risk of heart disease or having a heart attack. This involves stopping smoking, losing weight, eating a healthy, balanced diet, and exercising regularly. It also includes making sure that your blood pressure is well controlled, that your blood sugar is controlled if you have diabetes and that your triglyceride and cholesterol levels are being monitored properly. It is imperative that you continue with regular checkups with your general medical doctor and follow through on any screening tests or suggestions that he or she may have.

By leading a healthy lifestyle and working together with your regular physician at controlling modifiable risk factors such as diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, smoking, and high cholesterol, you can minimize your risk of heart disease.

If you have any other questions about psoriasis and heart disease, please ask me before you leave the office.