

# Talking to your doctor about sensitive issues

## Tips for women with psoriasis

Have you ever left your doctor's office and thought...

“ Oh I wish I mentioned this...asked about that...  
was more open about how I really feel...”

Argh, why do we do this?!

Don't worry, you're not alone...



Many of us often avoid speaking about things that are beyond treatment (e.g., family planning,<sup>1</sup> emotional concerns, sexual challenges<sup>2</sup>) with our doctors.<sup>3</sup>

There are many reasons for this. Sometimes we feel we are taking up their time, and other times, we are just embarrassed talking about uncomfortable subjects or don't want to be negatively judged.<sup>4</sup>



Research has shown that women are less likely to disclose all information about their condition to their doctor.<sup>4</sup>



We also know that, when it comes to family planning, women with psoriasis often delay having children,<sup>5</sup> have concerns about the impact of psoriasis and treatment on the unborn baby<sup>2</sup> or their fertility.<sup>6</sup>



But **open and honest communication** is very important in your treatment journey. Concealing information can create a missed opportunity for your doctor to understand how you are **REALLY** feeling and to decide on the best treatment course for you.

Although doctors are trained to deal with sensitive issues (and most likely have heard it before...) they are only humans and cannot read our minds. So, be open, they are there for you and to give you all the support and advice you need.

## So how can you make the most of your doctor's appointment?

**Prof. Rob Horne** (Professor of Behavioural Medicine at the University College London School of Pharmacy and Director of the Centre for Behavioural Medicine) provides the below suggestions and tips:



### Think ahead and write it down

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It's your time, so use it! **Pre-plan discussion points and questions** that you want to ask your doctor during the consultation. Think of it as a business plan

- If you have your questions written down in front of you, you are more likely not to forget and cover everything you want to cover
- Rehearsing might also make you feel more confident and less embarrassed



### Don't underplay the emotional impact your psoriasis might be having on your life

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- Tell your doctor how you are REALLY feeling. Don't forget that the topic of quality of life and emotional impact is something that is within your doctor's remit to address



### Ask questions

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- There is no such thing as a silly question
- Don't hesitate expressing doubts or concerns about your treatment or anything else. Your doctor will not take this personally, and it will enable you to have a more honest and open conversation
- If you **cannot** or **do not want to** follow doctors' guidance, letting them know can lead to suggestions of helpful alternatives or useful advice

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