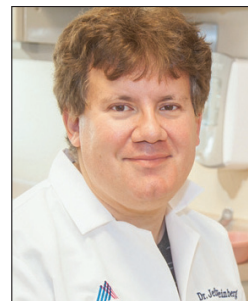


Psoriasis on the Hands and Feet: How Patients Should Care for These Areas



Jeffrey M. Weinberg, MD

Patients need to be educated about the nature and causes of hand and foot psoriasis, as the condition can adversely affect quality of life and occupational performance. Herein, tips for patients on proper care of the hands and feet are provided as well as treatment options.

What does your patient need to know at the first visit?

Patients with this condition need to avoid friction and excessive moisture. They should be counseled to use gloves for excessive wet work. I recommend they use cotton gloves on the hands, and then cover those with rubber gloves. Patients should use a hand emollient regularly, including after each time they wash their hands or have exposure to water. If the patient lifts weights, I recommend he/she use weight-lifting gloves to reduce friction.

What are your go to treatments? What are the side effects?

The first line of therapy for hand and foot psoriasis is a topical agent. I most often use a combination of topical steroids and a topical vitamin D analogue. If insurance is amenable, I may use a fixed combination of topical steroid and vitamin D analogue.

If topical therapies are not successful, I often consider using excimer laser therapy, which requires the patient to come to the office twice weekly, so it is important to determine if this therapy is compatible with the patient's schedule. Other options include oral and biological therapies. Apremilast is a reasonable first-line systemic therapy given that it is an oral therapy, requires no laboratory monitoring, and has a favorable safety profile. Alternatively, biologic agents can be utilized. There are several analyses available looking at the efficacy of different biologics in hand and foot psoriasis, but at this point there is

no consensus first choice for a biologic in this condition. Many available biologics may have a notable impact though.

The side effects of therapies for psoriasis are well established. Topical therapies and excimer laser are relatively safe choices. Apremilast has been associated with early gastrointestinal tract side effects that tend to resolve over time. Each biologic has a unique safety profile, with a rare incidence of side effects that should be reviewed carefully with any prospective patients before starting therapy.

How do you keep patients compliant with treatment?

It is important to reinforce gentle hand care and foot care. Patients need to understand that lack of compliance with treatment will lead to recurrence of disease.

What do you do if patients refuse treatment?

I try to educate them as best as possible, and ask them to return and reconsider therapy if they find that this condition affects their quality of life.

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