

Psoriatic arthritis treatment pathway

Getting on the right treatment for your psoriatic arthritis can make a huge difference to your quality of life.

There are drugs that can treat the symptoms of psoriatic arthritis. These include painkillers, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and steroid injections.

There are also drugs that can control the inflammation caused by psoriatic arthritis, which in turn can reduce the amount of joint swelling, pain and stiffness that occurs in the first place.

Your doctor will aim to find the best treatment for you as soon as possible, as that will improve the chances of keeping your condition under control. People respond differently to the various drugs for psoriatic arthritis, so what works for one person won't work for everyone. Therefore, finding the right treatment for you can sometimes take a bit of trial and error.



There's an order, or a pathway, in which you'll be offered drugs that can treat your condition. It's not always straightforward and some of the things your doctor will take into account include:



what conditions you've had in the past



your family medical history



whether you're a smoker



how you react to certain drugs



whether you want to start a family

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Step 1

Conventional synthetic disease modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (csDMARDs)

The most commonly used are, in any order:

- methotrexate
- sulfasalazine
- leflunomide

If you've been on one of these drugs for about three months, and it's not working, you could try another one, or you might try more than one at a time.

Step 2

Biologic or targeted therapies

If you've tried two or more csDMARDs, and they haven't worked for you, the next step could be to try one of these drugs. These drugs are known as biologic or targeted therapies. Currently available biologic or targeted therapies for psoriatic arthritis include the following, although new drugs are also in development.

- etanercept
- infliximab
- adalimumab
- certolizumab pegol
- golimumab
- apremilast
- secukinumab
- ixekizumab
- tofacitinib

You might also be asked to continue your methotrexate if you were already receiving it before starting any of these therapies. The choice of therapy can be influenced by many things and your doctor will discuss these with you.

Step 3

Biological therapy called ustekinumab

If you've tried one or more of the drugs in step two, and they haven't worked, you might be able to try another biological therapy called ustekinumab. This could be on its own, or at the same time as methotrexate.