Skin health

Canary Islands good for psoriasis sufferers

For several generations the Canary Islands have been known for their healthy climate.

For many Europeans this was the place to come to recuperate and the archipelago is once again being recommended for a particular illness, this time psoriasis. The word psoriasis comes from Greek and roughly translates to ‘itching condition’ or ‘being itchy’.

It is a common skin disease which can also cause inflammation and discomfort in the joints, known as psoriatic arthritis. It is characterized by scaly, red patches, papules, and plaques which, more often than not, do indeed itch.

There are five main types of psoriasis and the most common form, plaque psoriasis, usually manifests itself as red and white scaly patches on the top layer of the skin. It frequently occurs on the elbows and knees, but can affect any area of the body.

Although the causes are not fully understood it is thought to be genetically led though influenced by environmental factors. Though no cure is currently known, there are various treatments which can help alleviate symptoms.

One of these is phototherapy using sunlight or specially designed lamps that give off light in wavelengths of 311–313 nm. According to the MyPsoriasis association (www.mypsoriasis.es) sun exposure is reported as being beneficial in the majority of cases.

The sun’s ultraviolet rays can help reduce inflammation but doctors recommend that sufferers take extra special care not to burn, especially as many of the medications used to treat the condition can make the skin extra sensitive to the sun.

Swimming in the sea is also suggested as being beneficial, especially as opposed to using a swimming pool where the highly chlorinated water may cause irritation.

No wonder then that there is an increasing interest in the islands, particularly from Northern Europe. For instance, members of the Norwegian Psoriasis Federation recently visited Gran Canaria to try out the effects for themselves and were pleasantly surprised with the benefits.

Sunshine and bathing in the sea can apparently alleviate symptoms.

Economics affects health

Hair loss crisis

The present economic crisis is apparently provoking a greater number of people to suffer from alopecia.

According to a report in La Opinión newspaper, one hospital in Valencia, Spain, has spoken out regarding the increase in the incidence of the condition which causes significant hair loss.

Specialists from the area’s Hospital Casa de Salud dermatology department are apparently concerned about the rise in cases, especially amongst the younger section of the population.

Although hair loss can be caused by several factors, including certain medical conditions and treatments such as chemotherapy, many cases are thought to have stress as an underlying cause.

In the report, one of the hospital’s dermatologists, Salvador Laguarda, states that, “Fear of losing one’s job generates a level of stress that can not only worsen a patient’s suffering of the condition but can also cause new cases.” Laguarda also went on to express his concern regarding the “considerable rise” of cases in men and women as young as 20 years old.

There are a number of pharmaceutical and herbal remedies presently available and Laguarda recommends that anyone suffering symptoms of the condition should visit their doctor as soon as possible.

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