



HS SOS

Patient Flares Guide

I think I'm having a flare.
What now?

This resource may help you recognize symptoms of a flare, manage them, and stop a flare in its tracks.

Treatment goals should focus on ¹



**REDUCING
INFLAMMATION**



**CONTROLLING
PAIN**

Triggers that may cause
an HS flare include ²

- Increased stress
- Diet high in sugar and/or dairy
- Increased physical activity (heat, friction)
- Weight changes
- Smoking
- Menstrual cycle
- Hot weather
- Friction on susceptible areas
- Tight-fitting clothing

Symptoms of a flare are
unique to you and can include
but are not limited to ¹

- Increased number of new lesions
- Worsening of existing lesions
- Increased or new pain
- Increased drainage
- Change in odor of drainage
- New or worsening itching
- Bleeding
- Tingling or prickling sensation of your skin
- Impediments to your daily activity

Things you can do at home to ease your flare

- Use the medication that was prescribed
- Avoid triggers
- Warm compresses to ease draining lesions
- Cold compresses to ease inflamed lesions
- Warm bath
- Keep affected areas clean and dry
- Properly and frequently dress your wound

These are some things your provider can do to ease your flare³⁻⁴

- **Medical treatment:** topical creams, oral antibiotics, other systemic medication, injectable steroids, injectable biologics, and pain medication
- **Surgical treatment:** incision and drainage, deroofting

Reach out to your care team, urgent care center, or the emergency department (ED) if any of the following occur

- You suspect a lesion is infected, and you develop a persistent fever (>100.4°F / 38°C)
- Your pain is unmanageable on your current pain management plan and available over-the-counter medications
- You develop large, hot, pink or red patches (cellulitis) on your skin and have a persistent fever

To help limit the frequency of flares, track your symptoms and discuss them with your provider. Include the following items in your tracker⁵

- Number and location of new lesions
- Levels of pain, itching, and drainage
- Medication you are using, including when you started the medication, the dosage, and frequency
- Anything that you may feel contributed to the onset of the flare, such as specific foods, stress level, and exercise

REFERENCES

1. Fernandez JP, Thompson AS, Kirby JS, et al. Characterizing physical symptoms of flare in hidradenitis suppurativa: a patient survey. *Br J Dermatol.* 2021;184(1):160-162.
2. Thompson AM, Fernandez JM, Rick J, et al. Identifying triggers for hidradenitis suppurativa flare: a patient survey. *Br J Dermatol.* 2021;185(1):225-226.
3. Alikhan A, Sayed C, Alavi A, et al. American clinical management guidelines for hidradenitis suppurativa: a publication from the United States and Canadian Hidradenitis Suppurativa Foundations: Part II: Topical, intralesional, and systemic medical management. *J Am Acad Dermatol.* 2019;81(1):91-101.
4. Zouboulis CC, Desai N, Emtestam L, et al. European S1 guideline for the treatment of hidradenitis suppurativa/acne inversa. *J Eur Acad Dermatol Venereol.* 2015;29(4):619-644.
5. Hsiao J, Shi V. Hidradenitis Suppurativa Patient Guide. HS Patient Guide. Published March 23, 2023. Accessed Feb 2024, <https://hspatientguide.com/>

CONCEPTION - MARCH 2024

Dr. Janie Bujold MD, FRCPC, Dermatologist, Maria, Quebec.
Dr. Susan Poelman MSc, MD, FRCPC, Dermatologist, Calgary, Alberta
Dr. Hélène Veillette, MD, FRCPC, Dermatologist, Quebec, Quebec
Review by a patient partner

This tool was made possible by an unrestricted educational grant from UCB Canada

