



## **Enbrel and Humira for Plaque Psoriasis**

Psoriasis is a complex inherited skin condition. It is thought to be caused by an overactive immune system marked by inflammation resulting in thickening of the skin. The resultant skin plaques vary in color from pink-red to white-silver and can be itchy or painful. It is a life long illness with periods of flares and improvements that can be very frustrating for patients.

There are many treatments available to help control this disorder, depending on its severity. When mild disease is present, topical medications can be very effective. When the condition is moderate to severe, systemic medications may be considered.

One class of systemic medications utilized for treatment are the biologics. Biologics are medications that are derived from human genes that target specific components of the immune system. They act to suppress certain areas of the immune system to decrease inflammation and improve symptoms.

Two of these medications that we use at East Tennessee Dermatology Group are Enbrel and Humira. Both drugs are injectable medications administered at home by the patient or a family member. Initial laboratory evaluation will need to be completed prior to the use of either drug. As these medications suppress the immune system, it is important to check for certain infections or conditions that would prevent their use. If you are a candidate for either drug, laboratory monitoring will need to be obtained prior to each appointment for medication refills.

Important safety information and possible side effects from the use of Enbrel or Humira can be found on their respective web sites at:

[www.enbrel.com](http://www.enbrel.com)

and

[www.humira.com](http://www.humira.com)