



Eczema Awareness

According to the National Eczema Association, eczema affects 31 million individuals in the United States alone. It is a lifelong, chronic condition; however, you can be diagnosed anytime from infancy to late adulthood. While some people experience mild cases that are easily controlled, others suffer from severe disease and truly rely on advanced medical intervention to get through their daily lives.

In its most basic state, eczema presents as extremely dry, itchy skin. The itchiness usually presents first and is followed by the development of dry, red patches. These can worsen into cracked, fissured, and even bleeding, areas of skin as the cycle of itching and dryness continues. Chronically scratched areas become dark, thick, and leathery. As eczema eventually fades away, it typically leaves behind light or dark patches, dependent on the skin type of the affected individual. The discoloration left behind may take months to years to resolve.



Victoria Comeau, DO



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Different Forms of Eczema



dyshidrotic eczema



nummular eczema



baby eczema



A few different forms of eczema exist. Individuals who experience more chronic, generalized flares are deemed to have “atopic dermatitis”. Those with extremely itchy bumps on the hands and feet, most notably on the sides of fingers, are diagnosed as having “dyshidrotic eczema”. Patients that have coin-like dry, itchy patches typically have “nummular eczema”.

So why does this happen? Inflammation. Research is being poured into answering the question as to why some people experience an assertive inflammatory responses in the skin. Experts believe there are genetic predispositions and environmental triggers. Some eczema patients are unable to produce filaggrin, a substance critical in maintaining a healthy, hydrated skin barrier. When the skin barrier is compromised, irritants and allergens found in our

environment easily aggravate the skin and spark a cascade of itchy inflammation.

Environmental factors such as temperature, humidity, sweat, as well as exposure to fragrances and chemicals, all trigger eczema flares. Anything that promotes dryness - from cold, winter air, to frequent isopropyl alcohol-based hand sanitizer use - can also flare eczema. Even stress can provoke a flare! So, what are the best things to do to prevent flares? Hydrating the skin and replenishing the skin’s barrier are essential. Important compounds like urea and ceramides are naturally found in the skin and can be replaced using over-the-counter creams. Petroleum-based products like Vaseline and Aquaphor may be greasy, but work great to hydrate dry, chapped skin.

When over-the-counter hydration is not enough, that’s where we are able to help. Appropriately dosed topical steroids remain a mainstay of therapy, and have been for years. The good news is that there are many other options, too! Prescription non-steroidal anti-inflammatory creams and ointments are now available and have revolutionized the way we treat eczema. Combining topical treatment agents can combat itch and reduce the overall number of flares our patients experience. Very importantly, we now also have an at-home injectable medication available that specifically targets precise areas of the immune system that controls eczema. This medication has a high safety profile, but must be monitored. It has significantly improved the lives of our patients that suffer from the most severe forms of eczema.

And don’t forget, our providers are experts in comprehensive skincare! Aside from prescribing medications that finally give you some relief, we can also suggest changes to your lifestyle, products, and daily regimen that will naturally improve your skin health as well as the number of eczema flares you are experiencing.

We want you to know that under our guidance these therapies are safe, affordable, and attainable. There are a number of options available to get your skin back under control, even during the cold weather that lies ahead this winter. If you think you are suffering from eczema, we urge you to book a consultation with any of our providers who can offer you some options to help!



For more information, follow us on Social Media or visit our Website



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