

SKIN SERIOUSLY.

Condition: Eczema (Atopic Dermatitis)

Eczema refers to a chronic inflammatory disorder of the skin. Infants and young adults commonly develop eczema. It tends to run in families. Risk factors include stress, hot or cold environments, *synthetic* (man-made) fabrics in clothing, excessive sweating and other allergic conditions such as asthma and hay fever. Contact with irritants like soaps, detergents, hand lotions, skin creams, plants, dyes, topical medicines and certain foods can provoke as well as *exacerbate* (make worse) the eczema.

Symptoms *may* include:

Infants:

- Skin inflammation (swelling, tenderness, and warmth)
- Severe itching, oozing, blistering and crusting over affected area
- Red, raw skin due to scratching
- Rash that begins on the face and spreads to other body areas

Adults:

- Dry, thick brown, scaly skin
- Severe itching, especially at night
- Bleeding and crusting
- Signs of infection (pus discharge, increased pain and inflammation, fever)

What *your doctor* can do:

- Diagnose the disease by asking about your symptoms, doing a physical exam, ordering laboratory blood tests, and sometimes collecting a skin *biopsy* (removal and study of tissue).
- Prescribe cortisone (steroid) creams and lotions to decrease the inflammation, and tar creams to soothe thickened areas.
- Prescribe oral steroids to decrease inflammation and antihistamines to control itching.
- Prescribe antibiotics to treat bacterial infections.
- Recommend mild soaps, lotions, moisturizers and wet dressings to reduce discomfort.
- Recommend an ultraviolet light treatment for severe cases.

Adrienne Rencic, MD, PhD
Crossroads Center
1102 Baltimore Pike
Suite 202
Glen Mills, PA 19342
Phone : 610.558.1446
Fax : 610.558.1449

Hours:

Monday:

12:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Tuesday - Friday:

8:00 am - 5:00 pm

SKIN SERIOUSLY.

What *you* can do:

- Finish all of the antibiotics to prevent recurrent infections.
- Reduce stress with relaxation, counseling, or lifestyle changes.
- Wash affected area only with water and use mild soaps for other areas. Too much bathing and soap tends to dry and irritate the skin further. Non-detergent cleaners such as Cetaphil, Dove, or Aveeno should be used. Avoid ivory and deodorant soaps (Zest, Coast Guard, Irish Springs) and those with perfumes.
- Avoid trigger foods to limit outbreaks and keep fingernails cut short to prevent scratching.
- Wear clothing made of cotton (dries perspiration).
- Apply skin lotions and moisturizers as directed by your doctor (especially after a bath).
- Avoid over-the-counter lotions that contain alcohol, perfumes or *dyes* (colors). Talk your doctor or pharmacist about skin preparations that lubricate and provide relief.
- Cover your infant's hands with soft cotton gloves or socks to limit scratching.

What you can expect:

- In most infants, the eczema resolves by 3 years of age without recurrence.
- Adults may suffer flare-ups chronically throughout their lives.
- Some people develop bacterial infections of the skin.

Contact your doctor if you develop symptoms of eczema.

Adrienne Rencic, MD, PhD
Crossroads Center
1102 Baltimore Pike
Suite 202
Glen Mills, PA 19342
Phone : 610.558.1446
Fax : 610.558.1449

Hours:
Monday:
12:00 pm - 7:00 pm
Tuesday - Friday:
8:00 am - 5:00 pm