



# HEALTH



with

# Dr. A. Kumar

# ECZEMA: A common skin disease

Skin is not only our foremost sensory organ but it covers and protects everything inside our body. Imagine, without skin, our bones, muscles and organs would be hanging out all over the place! Skin holds everything together. However skin can become infected with bacteria, viruses and fungi, and can be irritated by chemicals or other substances it is in contact with. There are around 150 skin diseases but today we know about Eczema. The term 'eczema' covers a wide range of skin problems, which trouble people at different stages in their lives. Eczema can be divided into the following common categories: Atopic, Contact dermatitis, Varicose, Discoid, Hand eczema, Nummular, Asteatotic, Stasis dermatitis, Lichen simplex chronicus, Seborrheic dermatitis or seborrhoea etc.

**Symptoms of Eczema:** Though there are various kinds of Eczema, yet we can generalize the symptoms e.g. Itching, Redness, Thickening and scaling of the skin, Roughening of the skin, Blisters, formation of crusts etc.

**What causes eczema?** The causes are still not very much clear, but we do know that the tendency to get eczema is passed down through the family. If parents or grandparents of a child have eczema, there's an 80% chance that child will develop it.

Further, irritants like tobacco smoke, chemicals or solvents, even weather (hot, humid conditions or cold, dry ones) can aggravate eczema. Allergens like dust mites, moulds, plant pollens, pets etc. can trigger eczema. An individual's sensitivity to certain foods can also trigger eczema. Among those most suspect are dairy and wheat products, citrus fruits, eggs, nuts, chemical food additives,

preservatives and colourings. Stress can also make eczema worse or trigger a flare. Other causes may include the sudden changes in temperature or humidity, chemicals in pesticides, paint strippers, astringents, perfumes, harsh soaps, detergents and household cleaners, scratchy fabrics like wool, tissue fabric, some silks, furs etc.

**What is the treatment for eczema?** First let us understand that the main problem in Eczema is itching. So the main objectives for the treatment of eczema are to prevent itching, inflammation, and worsening of the condition. Treatment of eczema may involve both lifestyle changes and the use of medications. Treatment is always based upon an individual's age, overall health status, and the type and severity of the condition. It is important to realize that in most cases no one treatment will be effective but better to involve a combination of therapies to treat the skin and making lifestyle changes to control flare-ups.

The type of medication prescribed will depend on many factors, including the type of eczema, past treatment, and the patient's preference. Topical medication is frequently prescribed. If the eczema is more severe, phototherapy (a type of treatment that uses light therapy) or systemic (circulates throughout the body) medication may be prescribed.

**Prevention is always better than cure:** Following guidelines may help reduce the severity and frequency of flare-ups:

**1. Never leave skin dry,**

**keep it moisturized.** Eczema is usually dry and itchy, so applying moisturizers as needed to keep the skin moist is part of an effective treatment plan.

**2. Avoid contact with anything that irritates skin.** Soaps, bubble bath, perfumes, cosmetics, laundry detergents, household cleaners, too much time spent in water, finger paints, gasoline, turpentine, wool, a pet's fur, juices from meats and fruits, plants, jewellery, and even lotions can irritate sensitive skin. Know what irritates the skin and limit contact with all that does.

**3. Avoid sweating and**

**overheating.** The most common triggers of the scratch/itch cycle are sweating and overheating. It is essential to prevent these situations whenever possible.

**4. Avoid sudden changes in temperature and humidity.** A sudden rise in temperature can cause overheating and sweating. A drop in humidity can dry skin and lead to a flare-up.

**5. Use a cold compress to curb the itch.** Gently applying a cold compress to the area that itches can reduce inflammation and

lessen the desire to scratch.

**6. Dress in loose cotton clothes.** Synthetic fabrics, wool, and other materials that feel rough to the touch often irritate the skin and trigger a flare-up. Cotton and cotton-blend clothes usually make skin feel better.

**7. Double rinse clothes, and wash new clothes before wearing.** Laundry detergents can trigger flare-ups. Using a fragrance-free, neutral detergent and double rinsing clothes can help prevent flare-ups caused by laundry detergent. It also may be helpful to wash new clothes before they are

• Linseed: Equal parts of linseed oil and lime water mixed together is an effective remedy.

• Neem: The leaves, applied externally, are very useful in eczema and any type of skin diseases. They can be used either as a poultice, decoction or liniment.

• An oatmeal bath is very helpful to some.

• Apply a teaspoon of sandalwood paste mixed with a teaspoon of camphor to the affected areas.

• Vitamin B complex and biotin pills are good for healthy skin.

• Put Vitamin E on the affected area to

relieve the itching. Never use synthetic vitamin E.

• Take Zinc orally and apply it directly on the affected area.

• Apply a mixture of 1 teaspoon camphor and 1 teaspoon sandalwood paste on the rashes.

• Apply nutmeg paste to the affected areas.

• Add 1 tbsp turmeric powder to a tsp of bitter neem leaves. Grind to paste and apply.

• Evening primrose oil can also help.

• A serving of watercress every day is said to keep eczema at bay, along with a daily drink of parsley, spinach, celery, and wheat grass.

• Salt intake should be reduced. Sour items including pickles and curd are strictly prohibited.

• Boil 200 gms of mustard

oil in an iron vessel. In the boiling oil add 50 gms of fresh clean leaves of neem. When the leaves turn black, stop heating, cool the oil and sieve it. Apply this oil 4 times a day. If applied for a year the problem will never occur again.

**Diet:** Diet never causes eczema. Food only causes allergy, it does not cause eczema. It is the genes of a person that cause eczema. If you are allergic or sensitive to certain foods then try avoiding them. Dairy products, eggs, nuts, preservatives and citrus fruits are more likely to trigger eczema. Carrot and muskmelon are highly beneficial. Drink tomato juice daily, it will cure the symptoms in a few days. Avoid: Egg, Fish, Peanuts, Soya, milk, tin food etc.

**Life style:** Patients need to cleaned daily with warm water boiled with neem bark. After cleaning the paste of the bark should be applied over it and allowed to dry. Patients are not allowed to have any spicy and oily food. Patients need to avoid the hot, humid temperature and should kept free from any tight clothing. Nylons, terylenes and other synthetic fibers should be avoided as the inhibit evaporation of perspiration.

(Source: allayurvedadotcom / Diana Kohnle Hywel C. Williams / skin care health care dot net)

For all chronic or other diseases like migraine, headaches, Obesity, skin diseases, Eczema, leucorrhoea, arthritis, general weakness, diabetes, Anemia, male and female sexual problems and others, consult free and contact Dr. Kumar. email through this newspaper.

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