

Dealing with Adult Eczema

Nobody enjoys the feeling of itchy, dry skin. Often, the drier it gets, the more itchy it becomes and scratching all one can think about. Scratching the itch, unfortunately, can result in any number of secondary infections and is one of the worst things you could possibly do. Patients who suffer from eczema, especially those who have severe cases, can develop a plethora of bacterial and/or viral infections from breaking the skin by scratching. Some examples of resulting problems include herpes simplex, warts, viral molluscum, staphylococcal and streptococcal bacterial infections. Other problems that can result from ripping the skin include scaling and weeping, crusting, and/or bleeding which invites infections to take up residence. Also common is swelling around the lips that is called cheilitis, small, rough raised bumps on the skin's surface and darkened eyelids in response to the threat of illness.

Eczema afflicts an average of fifteen million Americans each year. One of the best ways to manage adult eczema is to keep your skin as well-hydrated as possible. This means regularly moisturizing your skin twice daily or more, if necessary. Ideally you should use emollient oil in the bath or shower and apply a soothing moisturizing lotion or cream to your skin when it is still damp from your shower. Moisturizing creams or ointments are best for eczema prone skin, lotions are not as ideal as they are water-based. Good soap or cleanser choices for bathing are Cetaphil, Neutrogena, or Dove. Excellent moisturizer choices include Curel, Emu Oil, Vaseline, Alpha Keri, Lubriderm and Aquaphor.

When itching it at its most severe, turn to a variety of ointments to help manage the flare-up, and give you relief from your symptoms. For mild eczema cases, try an anti-itch cream such as Pramoxine or Doxepin. Keep in mind though that these creams work best when there is only a small area of affected skin. At times, patients with eczema are prescribed corticosteroid steroid creams for their itching. One of the best-known brands is Glucocorticoid.

Mild to moderate cases of eczema have been successfully treated with Desonide or Hydrocortisone, while the most severe cases call for the extremely potent steroid cream, Clobetasol Propionate. It is important to discuss the steroid cream's potential side effects with your doctor before starting to use one. Steroid creams cannot be used continually as there is a risk of thinning of the skin and causing premature aging. Instead, they prescribe using them for one week, followed by a few weeks off and repeated as necessary.

Topical immunomodulators are ointments prescribed to eczema sufferers that have gotten much touting in the fight against eczema symptoms. So far they are proving to be extremely successful. The three most popular brands include Dougan and Elidel, which are pimecrolimus, and ProTopic which is a tacrolimus. Topical immunomodulators are effective by suppressing the immune system at the site of the skin condition.