
Inflammatory Skin Disease

There are several different types of dermatitis, also called eczema, and other skin conditions that affect infants and young children. Dermatitis causes dry, red, itchy, scaly skin. In severe cases, blistering and cracking can occur. In children with dark skin, eczema can look like tiny bumps and cause darker or lighter discoloration.

Types of inflammatory skin disease:

- **Contact dermatitis** is the most common type of eczema, caused by irritation from frequent hand-washing. It can also be caused by an allergic reaction to poison ivy or other contact with the skin. Allergic eczema usually starts 1-5 days after contact and can last for weeks.
- **Atopic dermatitis** is the most common chronic eczema in young children. It usually starts before age 2. Severe itch is the most common symptom, often interfering with sleep.
- **Seborrheic dermatitis** is also called “cradle cap” in infants, and most often affects the scalp and diaper area. In teenagers, it is called “dandruff,” and appears as greasy flaking around the nose and itchy, scaly scalp. In people with dark skin, affected areas look ashy.
- **Psoriasis** can appear at any age. In infants, it often starts with a red rash on the cheeks and in the diaper area. In older children, it often appears as thick, scaly bumps on the elbows and knees. Psoriasis can also occur in people with eczema.

Identify and avoid common triggers as a first step in treating eczema and psoriasis:

- **Skin damage**
 - Lack of moisture (dry air, infrequent bathing without moisturizers)
 - Rubbing or scratching
- **Products applied directly to the skin and not rinsed off**
 - Irritants (harsh cleansing products, alcohols)
 - Allergens (Kathon, cocamidopropyl betaine, nickel, formaldehyde, neomycin)
- **Germs**
 - Colonizers (germs that live on the skin)
 - Infections (colds, flu, ear infections, Strep throat, sinusitis, molluscum, herpes)
- **Food or air particle allergy triggers**
 - Some foods (egg, peanut, milk, soy, wheat, fish, potato, chicken, beef, pork) and particles (pollen, dog or cat dander, dust mites) can cause allergy symptoms, but are a rare cause of eczema.
 - Common food allergy symptoms include spitting up, stomach aches, diarrhea, poor weight gain, hives and rarely, difficulty breathing. Air particle allergies cause itchy eyes, runny nose, sneezing and hives.