

Atopic Dermatitis

Commonly known as Eczema (or Dandruff in the hair)

Skin problems are estimated to affect around 8.2 million people in the UK. The most common cause for concern is dermatitis or eczema as it is more popularly known. It is not one specific skin condition but a group of conditions that cause inflammation of the skin. The causal factors are many & varied but your age, sex, symptoms & frequency of occurrence can all help to determine the cause and thus help you manage the condition.



Eczema is an **inflammation** and not an **infection** although secondary infections may occur if the condition is prolonged especially in the "seborrhoeic" i.e. greasy skin variants where yeasts & bacteria take advantage of the anaerobic conditions of the skin. In the "dry" conditions, infections occur if the condition is not treated and the sufferers damages the skin by severe scratching.

Atopic dermatitis

This is by far the most common form, the result of an allergic reaction to environmental or nutritional elements that are tolerated by others but not by the sensitised individual. Chronic eczema is both environmental and partly inherited.

Childhood phase



Symptoms:

Red, itchy, dry skin that is vulnerable to secondary bacterial or viral infections & the formation of "hotspots"
Atopic dermatitis appears first in childhood & may or may not disappear in adulthood where there is a familial tendency. In others, it often occurs after periods of extreme stress or illness treated with antibiotics that suppress the immune system.



Adult phase

The allergens in order of importance:

- Dustmite in mattresses, soft furnishings, carpets & clothes
- Chemicals in fabrics, furnishings, herbicides, pesticides, toiletries, paints, inks & cleaning materials, jewellery
- Pets
- Foods

Studies in the USA reveal that 70% of eczema sufferers are allergic to dustmite! The residue of the dustmite is found principally in high use areas in the home such as beds, sofas, carpets and other upholstery and to a lesser extent clothes. If you are susceptible to dustmite, the patches tend to appear on the back, chest, back of legs, face & neck. The worst irritation is at night not least because those areas have the highest concentration of allergen.

The use of anti-dustmite mattress and furnishings sprays such as [Bio-Life HomeCleanse™](#) denatures dustmite residues and prevents dustmite re-infestation for one month after application. The [Bio-Life FabriCleanse™](#) solution denatures dustmite and dustmite residues in cool wash and may be used to clean your carpets.

The second most common cause is chemicals --- brominated flame retardants in carpets, permethrin & triclosan in carpets & furnishings to deter moths & fungi & beetles; bleach, phthalates, alcohols, SLES, & Parabens in toiletries, washing powders & cleaners. Natural untreated fabrics & furnishings combined with Allergy UK "Chemical Friendly" approved toiletries such as [Bio-Life MediCleanse™](#) can significantly reduce the incidence of chemically induced atopic dermatitis.

Contact pet allergies are easily diagnosed. If your cat, dog or small furry animal licks you or rubs against you, you will see red welts appear within a matter of hours and sometimes minutes!. Unfortunately, pet allergens are not just in the saliva, they quickly become airborne and adhere to the fabrics, furnishings and walls of the pet owning home.

[Bio-Life PetalCleanse™](#) encapsulates and neutralises the pet allergens on the coat. The [HomeCleanse™](#) & [FabriCleanse™](#) not only neutralise dustmite particles but also the pet allergens on your furnishings & fabrics.

Food allergies are perhaps one of the most difficult and this is one area where effective diagnosis requires a medically approved allergy test . Trying to isolate the offending nutrient in all but the most extreme cases is very difficult (e.g. peanut or seafood allergy that often results in anaphylactic shock).

Other natural remedies that may help

Kelp – is rich in Iodine and the one thing that all types of ALLERGY SUFFERERS seem to have in common is a predisposition to an underactive thyroid. Synthetic thyroxin is too drastic a solution for what is often a temporary condition. Kelp plus vitamin B & C daily along with a “little & often” high protein, low carbohydrate diet can help restore normal metabolic function and boost the immune system.

Vitamin A – essential for maintenance of epithelial tissue (skin).

Zinc – helps heal blemishes, reduces inflammation and may help reduce sebum production. Adequate Zinc is essential for the synthesis & absorption of vitamin A in the body.

Probiotics – normal flora also helps normal absorption of Nutrients in the body & maintain a balanced nutrient supply.

Echinacea – stimulates the immune system

Drinking 2 litres of water daily helps nourish the skin and remove wastes

Contact Dermatitis

This is a temporary reaction to an irritant or allergen. It can happen to anyone who comes into contact with an irritant at any time. The causes are many & varied --- plants (e.g. poison ivy, nettles), insect bites, latex, chemicals, herbicides, pesticides, molds and foods. In addition, Neomycin commonly found in antibiotic first aid ointments can also trigger these reactions.



Symptoms

- Red dry rash initially
- Skin discolouration
- Discharge & cracking later

The location where it occurred should give you some indication of the source but bear in mind that symptoms often do not appear until 48 to 72 hours after the contact was made. Severe reactions (e.g. anaphylactic shock) require emergency medical attention or the use of an epipen. In moderate cases, keeping the skin cool, clean, moisturized and free from infection is sufficient to restore to normal health.

Seborrhoeic dermatitis

In infants, it is known as "cradle cap" & this requires specialist advice from you GP or your Community Nurse. In adults, it is best known as "dandruff" but as this photograph shows, it can also occur on other areas of the body if there is an oily skin problem. Scalp, face & trunk may be affected



Symptoms

- Skin lesions
- Plaques over large areas
- Greasy, oily areas of skin
- Itching & discolouration
- White to yellowish scales & flakes - yeast infections

Causes

- Hormonal imbalances
- Allergic reactions
- Chemical sensitivity
- Emotional stress
- Some hereditary influence
- Food intolerance (controversial)

Genetics, stress and hormonal changes are all pre-disposing factors. It is most common in the male starting at puberty in response to the increase in testosterone gradually declining from middle age onwards. If it occurs in women, it is more often caused by reactions to colorants, perms, heat treatments, harsh shampoos and styling lotions in the hair. Spots on the face and back tend to occur with hormone changes – at puberty and again during early menopause.

Dandruff requires a mild but antimicrobial shampoo and this is precisely what [Bio-Life MediCleanse™](#) Shampoo & Conditioner are designed to do. Again, the company avoids the harsh chemicals that traditional medicated shampoos rely on i.e. peroxides, sulphur compounds & coal tar that can exacerbate the condition still further.

The [Bio-Life MediCleanse™](#) cleansers, gels and lotions are antimicrobial, exfoliating and anti-seborrhoeic so clear up the yeast infections and help regulate the amount of oil and sebum that the skin produces. The [MediCleanse™](#) Pure Essence spray is especially good for "hot spots" & the gel for removing scar tissue. The antioxidants in the moisturisers restore the skin to health and limit scarring.

Dyshidrotic dermatitis

Blisters on the palms of the hands, sides of the fingers and soles of the feet. The skin feels itchy with a burning sensation and it can crack and peel. It is most common in women aged between 20 & 40 and is often associated with stress and exhaustion!



Symptoms

- Small deep blisters on palms, sides of fingers & soles
- Intense burning & itching
- Cracking & peeling skin
- Areas may sweat excessively
- Skin between fingers can become soft & spongy
- Nail ridging, pitting, thickening & discolouration if protracted
- As skin peels, new crops of blisters emerge

Common Causes

- Humid, hot weather
- Stress & exhaustion
- Pre-existing contact allergy
- Infections
- Metal implants e.g. hip replacements
- Aspirin, oral contraceptives & smoking

Reducing stress is easy to say but not that easy to achieve. However, a good tonic, a planned policy of "me time" each week and daily use of [Bio-Life MediCleanse™](#) Treatment Gel & lotion can reduce the inflammation, itching & burning and prevent cracking. Avoid excessive sweating & never wear rubber gloves --- use cotton if absolutely necessary. As for the washing up – put it in the dishwasher! If you are on the contraceptive pill, discuss alternative variants with your GP.

Nummular dermatitis

Normally affects the elderly and usually starts with a trauma to the skin i.e. burn, cut or scrape. It is most common in women aged 55 to 65.

Round patches of scaly skin appear anywhere on the body where the skin has been damaged. It is at its peak in winter and is associated with dry skin.



Symptoms

- Tiny reddish spots & blister like lesions
- Reddened, coin shaped patches (1" to 4" in diameter)
- Weeping early on but crusty later & then scaly
- Itching & burning
- Secondary bacterial infections – Staphylococcus aureus

For elderly people, a chemically friendly bath & shower gel and regular use of a good body lotion is extremely important more especially during the winter months. Avoiding coarse wool garments is also to be recommended as these exacerbate the condition. Ensuring adequate heating and good nutrition are equally important.

Stasis dermatitis

Affects the lower legs of the elderly and it is basically a poor circulation problem often associated with varicose veins. Fluid builds up in the capillaries because of raised blood pressure. It is most common in men aged 55 to 65, often the result of an undiagnosed blood pressure problem



First & foremost, see your GP & try and sort out the circulation and the blood pressure. Thereafter, regular, gentle exercise is helpful along with a good diet, a good loofah for "buffing" in the bath and an antimicrobial moisturising body lotion.

Last but not least, we have **Neurodermatitis**, a non-allergic itch that often appears in times of stress, starting with a single itch that spreads progressively if you scratch!! The exact cause is not known and the help of your GP is recommended if the condition is prolonged. Meanwhile, the **Bio-Life MediCleanse™** range can help you control the symptoms and as the products contain aromatherapy agents that help you de-stress, they may even help you reduce the cause!!!

SUMMARY TABLE

TYPE	SYMPTOMS	MOST PREVAILENT	COMMON CAUSES
Contact dermatitis	Red dry rash initially but with some discharge later Random & spasmodic	Anyone who comes into contact with an irritant	Plants e.g. Poison ivy Latex Wasp & insect stings Chemicals Herbicides & pesticides Nickel, Mould & Foods
Atopic dermatitis	Red, itchy, dry skin. Appears first in childhood & may or may not recur	In infants, on the chest, face scalp & neck In adults, behind the knees, around the elbows, face & lower back	Dustmite & pet allergens Chemicals in toiletries e.g. SLES, Parabens, Perfumes, Alcohols Certain foods Stress
Seborrheic dermatitis	Dandruff in adults Cradle cap in infants Secondary bacterial infections with Pityrosporum ovale	Males from puberty onwards. In women, reaction to harsh chemicals & heat treatments	Hormonal imbalances Allergic reactions Chemical sensitivity Emotional stress Some hereditary influence Food intolerance (controversial)
Dyshidrotic dermatitis	Small deep blisters on palms, fingers & soles Intense burning & itching Cracking & peeling skin Areas may sweat Skin between fingers can become soft & spongy Nail ridging, pitting, thickening & discolouration if protracted As skin peels, new crops of blisters emerge	In women 20 to 40 years of age	Humid, hot weather Stress Pre-existing contact allergy Infections Metal implants e.g. hip replacements Aspirin, oral contraceptives & smoking
Nummular dermatitis	Tiny reddish spots & blister like lesions Reddened, coin shaped patches (1" to 4" in diameter) Weeping early on but crusty later & then scaly Itching & burning Secondary bacterial infections – Staphylococcus aureus	Women aged 55-65	Burn, cut, scrape or other trauma
Stasis dermatitis	Inflammation of the lower legs	The elderly especially men aged 55-65	High blood pressure Poor circulation
Neuro-dermatitis	Non-allergic itch	Anywhere & spreads	Stress key factor but not well understood.

Bio-Life Products that may benefit dermatitis sufferers

BRAND	SUITABLE FOR:	FUNCTION
Bio-Life HomeCleanse™ and FabriCleanse™	Atopic dermatitis	To get rid of dustmite in mattresses & furnishings
Bio-Life PetalCleanse™	Atopic dermatitis – pet owning households	To remove pet allergens at source – the pet
Bio-Life MediCleanse™ Face Cleanser & Bath & Shower Gel	Atopic, Seborrhoeic, Nummular, Stasis & Neuro dermatitis	“Chemical friendly” toiletries with antimicrobial properties
Bio-Life MediCleanse™ Antimicrobial Gel	Contact, atopic, dyshidrotic, stasis & Neurodermatitis Routine hand treatment	“Chemical friendly” to remove dry, scaly skin & prevent infection
Bio-Life Pure Essence	Sebhorroic dermatitis & greasy “hot spots”	Potent antimicrobial – yeasts & bacteria
Bio-Life MediCleanse™ Shampoo & Conditioner	Sebhorroic dermatitis - dandruff	“Chemical Friendly” & antimicrobial
Bio-Life MediCleanse™ Moisturiser	All dermatitis	For anti-oxidants to promote healing & to prevent scarring