

# Understanding Eczema

Knowing about the causes and symptoms of eczema can help support your skin care.



## What is eczema?

**Eczema, also known as atopic dermatitis, is the most common inflammatory skin condition.**

Eczema can cause:

- Itchiness
- Dry and scaly skin
- Discoloration
- Rashes



The dry skin that comes with eczema can itch—and scratching it can cause a rash that itches even more, leading to more scratching.

This “itch/scratch cycle” can cause skin to crack and bleed, which can lead to infections.



## How does eczema develop?

**The exact cause of eczema is still unknown, but there are factors that lead to its development:**



### Immune system

Your immune system is a part of your body that works hard to protect you, but it plays a major role in eczema. People with eczema can have an overactive immune system.



### Genetics

Eczema may run in the family. If your parents have eczema, you are more likely to develop it yourself.



### Environment

Pollution, allergens, fragrances, and certain chemicals can all worsen symptoms. Hot weather and sweat on your skin can also worsen eczema symptoms.

## Is eczema the same for everyone?

No, eczema isn't the same for everyone. Eczema in people with darker skin tends to appear thicker and/or bumpier than in those with lighter skin. People with darker skin tones may see gray, purple, or darker brown patches on their skin, while people with lighter skin tones may have red patches.





## Is eczema predictable?

Eczema can be unpredictable. Eczema inflammation may cause symptoms to pop up anywhere on the body, and it may be hard not to think about the next flare. A treatment that works long term may help.

## How is eczema treated?

Eczema is a complex condition with many different treatment options. It is important to discuss treatment with your doctor or a doctor that specializes in eczema, called a dermatologist.

## Why Seeing a Dermatologist Matters



- Early diagnosis can prevent long-term skin damage and discomfort.
- Many conditions worsen without medical treatment, even if symptoms come and go. Follow-up care is important to monitor your condition and adjust treatment as necessary.
- Dermatologists can provide personalized treatment plans.



## Navigating to a Dermatologist

Getting the right care starts with taking the right steps:

**Check Your Insurance:** Confirm if you need a referral for a dermatologist visit.

**Meet with Your Doctor:** Discuss your concerns and ask for a referral if required.

**Book an Appointment with a Dermatologist:** Come prepared with your medical history, symptoms, and goals for treatment to ensure the best consultation.



## Questions to Empower your Visit

- “Could this be related to an autoimmune condition or family history?”
- “What are my treatment options, and what should I expect?”
- “Are there any lifestyle changes or triggers I should be aware of?”
- “Can you explain how this condition affects my body and long-term outcome?”



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