



7 Types of Eczema to Be Aware Of

by MONICA MCCUTCHEN

Recognizing the Different Types of Eczema

Millions of people have eczema, and if you have it, you will know. Eczema is much more than just an irritating skin rash that you cannot stop scratching. It's irritating, painful, and sometimes embarrassing, depending on where on your body it is located. Plus, there are different types of eczema to be aware of.

Even though eczema is not life-threatening or contagious, this skin inflammation can be very uncomfortable, particularly if you have eczema on your hands, face, and neck.

Eczema affects people of all ages. Some of the more common symptoms include bumps on the skin, dryness, redness, and a cracking or scaly skin texture. Skin affected by eczema can be extremely itchy, making it hard not to scratch and irritate the skin even more.

There are seven different types of eczema, each with their own symptoms and triggers. Let's take a closer look at each one.

Atopic Dermatitis

Atopic dermatitis is the most common type of eczema and appears more often in babies and children under the age of 5 than in adults. If you had atopic dermatitis as a child, you may continue to have mild symptoms through your teens and into adulthood.

The main symptoms of atopic dermatitis may include:

- Dry, scaly skin
- Red, itchy skin
- A rash on the arms, legs, and face, particularly the cheeks
- Cracks behind the ears and knees
- Blisters and open sores

Atopic dermatitis may flare-up when certain allergies occur, such as asthma, hay fever, or food allergies.

Atopic dermatitis often requires the care of a dermatologist to ensure that skin does not become infected.

Dyshidrotic Eczema

Dyshidrotic eczema is extremely itchy and can be more difficult to deal with than other types of eczema. If you have dyshidrotic eczema, you will have small, fluid-filled blisters on your skin. These are usually found on the soles of your feet, on the sides of your fingers, and on the palms of your hands.

The main symptoms of dyshidrotic eczema may include:

- Red, itchy skin
- Flaking, cracked, and scaly skin
- Tiny fluid filled blisters on the feet, fingers, and hands

After the blisters appear, they take about three weeks to dry up, leaving behind scaly, flaky skin. This type of eczema can be chronic, with new blisters often appearing before the previous ones have healed.

There are some risk factors with dyshidrotic eczema. You're at higher risk if you have atopic or contact dermatitis, or if there's a family history of dyshidrotic eczema or hay fever.

Contact Dermatitis

You can get contact dermatitis if your skin comes into contact with allergens or irritating substances. Your skin can become inflamed and red, and feel as though it is burning.

Allergic Contact Dermatitis

There are thousands of allergens that can cause contact dermatitis. Some of the more common allergens that may cause a rash are:

- Chemical fragrances and ingredients in detergents, shampoos, and soaps
- Preservatives in makeup and skin care products
- Chemicals found in hair coloring
- Poison ivy
- Metal such as cobalt, gold, and nickel
- Latex gloves

Irritant Contact Dermatitis

Irritant contact dermatitis is more common than dermatitis from allergens. It can occur when your skin comes into contact with something that causes irritation. There are so many causes that it can be hard to determine what the irritant is. Some common irritants can include diaper rash and dry hands caused by washing your hands too often.

Symptoms of contact dermatitis include:

- Red, burning skin
- Skin rash and swelling
- Blisters

If you develop contact dermatitis, it is important to find out what the allergen or irritant is that is causing your skin to react. You can then treat the skin condition and avoid further contact.

Nummular Dermatitis

Nummular dermatitis is also known as discoid eczema. It can occur at any age and is often harder to treat than other types of eczema. Nummular dermatitis also looks very different from other types of eczema. Coin-shaped sores appear on your skin, typically on your arms, hands, legs, torso, and feet. These tiny sores may break open as the fluid pops through the skin and then crust over. Nummular eczema can take weeks, sometimes even months, to disappear.

There is still some speculation about what causes nummular dermatitis. The crusted and dry patches of skin can appear after you've experienced a minor skin injury (for example, an insect bite) or if you have dry skin in the

winter.

Some of the more common symptoms of nummular eczema may include:

- Dry, itchy skin
- Scaly and cracked skin
- Coin-like, round dry patches
- Open blisters and sores

You may be more at risk for nummular dermatitis if you have atopic dermatitis or are taking certain medications.

Seborrheic Dermatitis

You'll probably recognize seborrheic dermatitis by its more common name, dandruff. This type of eczema occurs on the body where there are a lot of sebaceous glands. These are oil-producing glands and are typically found on the scalp, face, chest, and upper back.

It's not known what causes seborrheic dermatitis, but hormones and genes may be contributing factors. An overabundant growth of malassezia, a naturally growing yeast, may also cause the skin to react.

The most common symptoms of seborrheic dermatitis may include the following:

- Redness of the skin
- Skin that is swollen and greasy
- Crusty white/yellow flakes

Seborrheic dermatitis can affect people of all ages, however, it is more common in women than men.

Stasis Dermatitis

Stasis dermatitis is also known as gravitational dermatitis, or venous eczema. This type of eczema happens when your body is not able to efficiently circulate blood back to the heart. The blood collects in your legs, then pressure builds up and causes swelling. Fluid can leak from the veins to the skin, resulting in stasis dermatitis.

Symptoms of stasis dermatitis may include:

- Redness and itchy skin
- Scaly skin
- Swelling of the ankles
- Soreness and pain

Although stasis dermatitis can occur at any age, it's most commonly seen in people over 50. Other risk factors that may cause this type of eczema include high blood pressure, being overweight, and a history of blood clots.

Neurodermatitis

This type of eczema is an inflammation of the skin that's caused by excessive scratching due to itchiness. The more you scratch, the more irritated the skin becomes, leading to chronic eczema. Itchiness can be caused by stress, the habit of scratching, or an insect bite.

Typical symptoms of neurodermatitis may include:

- Patches of dry, scaly skin
 - Leathery, thick skin
-

If you have neurodermatitis, consider applying a heavy moisturizer to protect and soothe your skin.

Once you know what type of eczema you have, you can take steps to treat and perhaps prevent future flare-ups. Treatment for some types of eczema involves the protection of your damaged skin from triggers and allergens.