5 Symptoms of Eczema to Be Aware Of

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Five Common Eczema Symptoms

Eczema isn't uncommon, with approximately 10–30 percent of Americans identified as having it. Globally (as of 2015) 245 million people were diagnosed with some type of eczema, making it an extremely widespread condition. But no matter how many people have it, eczema is undesirable, with a myriad of symptoms that have negative consequences, both comfort-wise and cosmetic.

Identifying eczema symptoms early and seeking appropriate treatment is important for managing your condition. However, because they are so varied it's easy to confuse eczema with several similar skin conditions, which can make it more difficult to treat effectively.

Symptoms of Eczema to Be Aware Of

There are a few telltale signs that you may have eczema. If you experience any of them you can pursue the proper course of action, and treatment options, with your doctor. If you experience any of these eczema symptoms, be sure to seek medical treatment.

Moderate to Severe Itching

Of all the commonly cited eczema symptoms, none are likely to cause you as much discomfort as the itchiness associated with it. While this symptom can be mild, suffers often describe moderate to severe itching which can be extremely uncomfortable and frustrating.

Itching might be the most damaging symptom of eczema, and it's not just the annoyance it causes. Because itching leads to scratching, a lot of aesthetic problems associated with eczema are either a result of or made worse by, scratching your itch. Whether triggered by allergies, an irritant, or a spontaneous flare-up, satisfying your itch can lead to the raised, red skin that is commonly associated with eczema.

Inflammation and Redness

Redness and inflammation are the hallmarks of an eczema flare-up. It can look unattractive and undesirable, especially if it's in a visible place like your face or hands. It can be exacerbated by itching but can appear regardless of whether or not you've been scratching.

In addition to standard rash-like redness and inflammation, your skin can also be raised with small bumps and even fluid-filled blisters. Everyone reacts to eczema differently, so the appearance of your rash might vary, but in general inflamed, reddish skin is one of the most common symptoms.

Oozing and Crusting

Among the least desirable eczema symptoms are the oozing and crusted pus that accompanies the rash, and the itching it instigates. As previously mentioned, when the rash becomes inflamed, skin blisters and lesions can form. When these break, pus can leak and dry on your skin. It is gross, but it's also a symptom you should be prepared to face if you are experiencing a bad eczema flare-up.

Many creams and treatments can minimize these symptoms. However, by simply keeping your rash dry, avoiding scratching at all costs, and not popping blisters in the event they form, you can greatly minimize the visible impacts that an oozing rash unfortunately brings.

Dryness and Sensitivity

Dry, flaky skin is another very common eczema symptom. Even if you are careful to avoid itching, your rash might manifest first as dry, sensitive skin regardless. Not only is this unattractive, but it can be quite painful, especially if clothing or other fabrics rub against the affected area. Flaky skin is one of the first signs you may be experiencing an eczema episode, so it's good to pay attention to this symptom, particularly if you wish to seek early treatment.

Dryness and sensitivity can also occur after the flare-up has passed. Unlike other symptoms which are only present during the eczema episode itself, dryness and sensitivity can persist long afterward. Like many of the symptoms on this list, the number one way you can minimize this is by avoiding scratching at your rash. Self-inflicted sensitivity can be just as uncomfortable as eczema itself.

Dark, Leathery Appearance

While this is often associated with chronic eczema, dark and leathery patches of skin are a relatively common symptom. When redness and inflammation have subsided, the epidermis may still bear the scars from the rash leading to discoloration and a change of texture. This may only remain a short while after the flare-up, but it could last much longer which is undesirable for those concerned with skin evenness.

While largely a cosmetic concern, dark, leathery skin is not an eczema symptom that sufferers covet. And for those who have frequent episodes, especially when they reoccur in the same area, this symptom may become an unfortunate, persistent reality. Acting to treat the aforementioned symptoms before they get worse is important for mitigating long-lasting damage.

Final Considerations

There are a lot of symptoms associated with eczema and a lot of people cope with them. They can have physical consequences like aggravating itches, burst blisters, and scarring, or they can simply look awful with leathery patches and inflammation.

Part of the problem with eczema is how many symptoms it shares with other skin conditions. Knowing what to look for, learning what they are, and how to avoid them is crucial so you can properly treat your eczema.