

SEIB State Wellness Center
Healthcare Clinic and Pharmacy

October's Topic:

By: Jacob Kenney, Namita Vashi, Pharm.D. candidates



October is National Eczema Education Month!

What is Eczema?

Eczema is a general term for several conditions that cause inflammation of the skin. The most common form of eczema is atopic dermatitis, which is a chronic, allergic, inflammation of the skin characterized by itching and results from exposure to an irritant to the skin. Other forms of eczema include allergic contact dermatitis (e.g. touching poison ivy), neurodermatitis (e.g. irritated insect bite), and many more.

Atopic dermatitis is typically diagnosed in very early childhood with roughly half of patients obtaining a diagnosis before the age of 1 and 85% obtaining a diagnosis before the age of 5. Adults are much less likely to develop atopic dermatitis, and adult-onset atopic dermatitis is usually caused by constant exposure to an irritant.

Overall, the prevalence of atopic dermatitis is increasing in developed countries with the rates of children developing the condition increasing from 10-15% to 15-30%. The most likely explanation for the increase in atopic dermatitis is the hygiene hypothesis, which states that the lack of exposure to disease-causing substances in the developed world has led to the development of immune systems that now attack non-disease-causing substances. Other allergic conditions such as asthma and seasonal allergies are also thought to be on the rise due to the hygiene hypothesis, and people diagnosed with atopic dermatitis are at an increased risk for developing these conditions as well.

Symptoms of Eczema

The symptoms of eczema are different for each person. The rash may even look different or affect different parts of your body from time to time. It can be mild, moderate, or severe. Generally, people with eczema symptoms suffer from dry, sensitive skin. Eczema is also known for its intense itch. The itch may be so bad that you scratch your skin until it bleeds, which can make your rash even worse and cause a secondary infection. This is called the itch-scratch cycle. You may have times when your eczema flares and times when your skin is clear. Although you may be experiencing some or all of these eczema symptoms, a diagnosis of eczema can be made only by your doctor.

Symptoms can include:

- Dry, sensitive skin
- Intense itching
- Red, inflamed skin
- Recurring rash
- Scaly areas
- Rough, leathery patches
- Oozing or crusting
- Areas of swelling
- Dark colored patches of skin

HEALTHCARE CLINIC HOURS:

Monday-Wednesday, Friday

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Thursday

9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Phone: (334) 263-8470

Fax: (334) 263-8670

Email: hcc@alseib.org

PHARMACY HOURS:

Monday-Wednesday, Friday

7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Thursday

9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Phone: (334) 263-8460

Fax: (334) 263-8660

Email: rx@alseib.org

Causes of Eczema

Irritants

Soaps and detergents
Shampoos
Dishwashing liquids
Bubble Bath
Disinfectants (i.e chlorine)



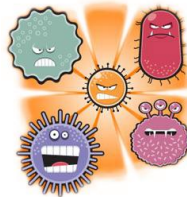
Allergens

House dust mites
Pets (cats > dogs)
Pollens (seasonal)
Molds
Dandruff



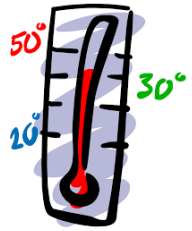
Microbes

Certain bacteria like S. aureus
Viruses
Certain Fungi



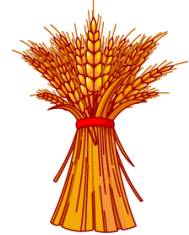
Hot/Cold Temperatures

Hot weather
High and low humidity
Perspiration from exercise



Foods

Dairy products
Eggs
Nuts and seeds
Soy products
Wheat



Stress

Hormones



Treatment

Antihistamines

Antihistamines such as Benadryl[®], Zyrtec[®] or Claritin[®] can be used to reduce the itching associated with eczema. Drowsiness is common with Benadryl[®].

Bathing

Take 1-2 lukewarm baths for 5 minutes at a time every day to reduce symptoms. Pat dry and apply moisturizer 3 minutes after.

Lotions

The best lotions to use in eczema are occlusive lotions such as zinc oxide and should be applied liberally to reduce symptoms and keep skin hydrated.

Topical Steroids

Steroid creams include hydrocortisone, betamethasone, and clobetasol. They are usually applied to the affected skin 1-2 times each day until the flare-up has been reduced. Only weak steroid creams should be used on the face, and thinning of the skin could occur if strong steroids are used for long periods of time.



Tacrolimus (Protopic[®]) and Pimecrolimus (Elidel[®])

These drugs can be given as creams to treat flare-ups of eczema, however due to the increased risk of cancer seen with these, sunscreen should be used.

Phototherapy

Ultraviolet light therapy can be used to treat eczema although it is rare and expensive. Sunburn-like symptoms may occur immediately.

QUESTIONS

- What is the most commonly used medication used to treat eczema?
- Can a person be cured of eczema?
- Will my child grow out of their eczema?
- How can I tell if my eczema is infected? What are the signs?

ANSWERS

- Emollients and topical steroids
- Unfortunately at present there is no cure for eczema but it can be well managed.
- Unfortunately, there are no guarantees that a child will grow out of eczema. However, research has shown that 65% of children will be free of eczema by the time they are 7 years old, and 74% by the time they reach 16 years of age.
- Infection should be suspected if the skin has blisters, is weeping a clear or yellow fluid, reddening, itching, if you have raised temperature, flu-like symptoms, or swollen glands in neck or armpit.

References

1. Weston WL, Howe W. Patient Information: Atopic dermatitis (eczema) (Beyond the Basics). In: UpToDate, Post TW (Ed), UpToDate, Waltham, MA. (Accessed on September 24, 2015.)
2. Kanchongkittiphon W, Gaffin JM, Phipatanakul W. Child with atopic dermatitis. *Ann Allergy Asthma Immunol.* 2015;114:6-11.
3. Law RM, Kwa PG. Atopic dermatitis. In: DiPiro JT, Talbert RL, Yee GC, Matzke GR, Wells BG, Posey LM, editors. *Pharmacotherapy: A pathophysiologic approach.* 9th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Medical; c2014. p. 1595-1604.
4. National Eczema Society. Accessed on 20 Oct 2015 [cited on 25 Oct 2015]. Available from: <http://www.eczema.org/about-eczema/>
5. National Eczema Association. Accessed on 20 Oct 2015 [cited on 25 Oct 2015]. Available from: <https://nationaleczema.org/eczema>



www.alseib.org

Please let us know how we are doing by filling out a survey at the following link:

https://auburn.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_3DXRXyUp8KC7Lzn

**CALL FOR AN
APPOINTMENT
TODAY!**

(334) 263-8470

State Wellness Center

101 S. Union Street
Montgomery, AL 36104

All active employees, covered spouses of active employees, non-Medicare retirees and covered non-Medicare spouses of retirees that use the State Employees' Health Insurance Plan (Group 13000) as their primary insurance plan are eligible for a wellness premium discount. Each wellness plan year is November 1 through October 31.

SEIB and Local Government employees along with SEIB retirees are able to use the State Wellness Center Pharmacy. The pharmacy offers various over the counter products at discounted prices and a **free medication delivery service**. Delivery can be provided to the patients located in Montgomery. Please designate which site you would like your medication delivered to, and if it is to your residence someone must be available at the home to receive the delivery.

State Wellness Center Healthcare Clinic

The SEIB clinic has a quality healthcare **TEAM** that includes nurse practitioners, an ambulatory care pharmacist, a physician, and nurses who work closely together to take care of your health and wellness needs.

Services Include:

- Treat minor illnesses
- Provide health education & monitoring
- Check health progress between appointments
- Share information with your physician
- Monitor efficacy & safety of every medication
- Evaluate out of pocket medication expense
- Smoking cessation & weight loss services
- Diabetes education program
- Immunizations & injectable medications
- Develop a personalized medication plan
- Monitor control of chronic illnesses
- Medication check-ups
- Medication therapy management