



What's the Deal With Eczema?

Eczema, also known as dermatitis, is intense inflammation of the skin that can lead skin to become dry, itchy red and irritated. It can be found anywhere on the body, but it most frequently appears on the hands, neck, back of the knees and inside of the elbows. The exact cause of eczema is unknown, but it is thought to be somewhat due to genetics or an imbalance in the immune system which causes release of inflammatory chemicals. It can affect anyone one at any age, but most commonly appears in childhood. It is possible to have eczema only once, but the majority of cases are chronic and characterized by intermittent flare ups throughout a person's life.

Often, flare ups are caused by certain factors that trigger a reaction in the skin. The best form of prevention is to identify and remove triggers such as wind or allergy-producing fabrics. While there is no cure for eczema, the symptoms are treatable. For mild cases, over-the-counter topical creams and antihistamines can relieve itching. If symptoms do not improve, see your dermatologist to be evaluated and placed on the best course of treatment. Your dermatologist may prescribe steroid creams, oral steroids, antibiotic pills or antifungal creams. One important thing to remember is to not scratch your skin. Scratching thickens the skin and can lead to scarring. If the skin is broken, it can become susceptible to bacterial or viral infections. If you suspect infection or your skin is cracked and oozing, see your dermatologist as soon as possible.

Source:

Villett, M. (n.d.). 3 ways to soothe eczema | Health | Best You | Best Health. Retrieved April 24, 2015, from <http://www.besthealthmag.ca/best-you/health/3-ways-to-soothe-eczema#EguiusDhZ3s5tiOV.97>

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