

Eczema

Eczema definition:

A generic name for some types of allergies that affect the skin, some due to genetic factors and the other acquired. Symptoms range from skin dryness to redness and the formation of small water bubbles and crusts associated with severe itching. It comes in a variety of forms and shapes, and varies from one person to the other.

Types of Eczema:

- **Endogenous eczema (atopic / structural inflammation):**

A common condition that affects children at an early age starting from the first forty days of age and lasts for several years. Its first sign is redness in the cheeks with the formation of scales and vesicles associated with itching, often due to a family history of infection with one of the types of allergies such as: Allergies in the chest, eyes and nose (hay fever), similar to dry milk in front of the head that expands with age and often disappears before school age.

Its types include:

- **Fatty eczema:**

A common condition that often affects the scalp or fatty areas of the body (such as: Nose, ear, eyelashes, eyebrows, and chest) causing redness, itching and dandruff. In infants, it can cause cortical spots in the head, and fungi may play a role in that.

- **dyshidrotic eczema:**

Often appears in the form of small bubbles accompanied by itching of the skin, and the most common places for its appearance are on the fingers and toes, palm and sole.

- **Discoïd eczema:**

A skin problem that leads to blisters in the form of red scaly tablets that cause itching or burning.

- **Chronic simple allergy.**

- **External eczema (contact):**

The reaction of the immune system towards touching certain irritants that come in contact with the skin, causing redness and itching in the area.

It has two types:

- **Allergic contact dermatitis:** This requires prolonged and repeated exposure to the allergen.
- **Toxic Contact dermatitis:** This appears immediately after exposure to the allergen (like Henna painting) and is severe taking the form of large skin bubbles.
- **Stasis eczema:** Occurs in people with poor circulation, usually appearing in one or both legs as it is the furthest area the blood can reach. it is rare to appear in other areas. Swelling of the ankle, which disappears upon sleep and appears during the day, is the first of its signs.
- **Neurodermatitis:** Begins with itchy attacks that appear in any area of the skin (often affecting the back of the neck, arms, legs, or genital areas and around it). The attack may be severe and persistent, causing scratches and ulcers on the skin. Mostly, attacks happen in times of relaxing or sleeping, causing the person to wake up.

A person can develop several types of eczema at the same time.

Treatment:

Knowing the type of eczema and its triggers is the best way to start treatment and control so as not to impede normal life, and attempts to try different methods may require several months or years, however, even in response to treatment may show signs and symptoms.

If normal hydration and other self-care steps are not enough, your doctor may recommend one of the following treatments and medicines:

- Creams that control itching and inflammation.
- Infection control medications (e.g. antibiotic ointments).
- Oral antipruritic drugs.

Skin care:

- Avoid the following causes of eczema:
 - Some skin irritants (such as: Some types of soap, some fabrics, creams).
 - Psychological stress.
 - Substances to which the patient is allergic (e.g: Some foods, animals, pollen).
- Avoid extreme heat and extreme cold.
- Ensure continuous moisturizing with suitable and fragrance-free creams.
- Avoid itching as much as possible and know its causes.

Cause:

- The exact cause of eczema is unknown, but doctors believe it is a combination of genetic and environmental factors.
- People with eczema may have an imbalance in the gene responsible for the formation of a protein that contributes to the building of a protective layer of the skin. When it does not form enough, the skin moisture fades and bacteria enter, so the skin of the infected is very dry and more susceptible to infection.
- Eczema is a non-communicable disease and cannot be transmitted from one person to another.

Risk factors:

- Personal or family history of eczema, or any type of allergies (hay fever or asthma).
- Milk does not cause eczema at any age but may affect its severity from some types of formula and additives or preservatives.

Most vulnerable groups:

Eczema affects all age groups and often appears in children, and those who recover from childhood are more likely to develop it in the future.

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