

## Ask Dr. Mikell

By Dr. Oswald Mikell

### Dr. Oswald Mikell, MD • Dermatology Associates of the Lowcountry

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#### Dermatitis and Eczema

Eczema, also known as Atopic Dermatitis, can irritate skin all over the body. It is almost always itchy and often leaves the skin feeling dry, rough, flaky and extremely uncomfortable.

#### Q: Is there a difference between Dermatitis and Eczema?

The word "Eczema" has a few meanings. It is a general term that means a family of skin conditions that causes the skin to become inflamed, swollen, irritated, and itchy. Dermatitis is any irritation or inflammation of the skin.

#### Q: What are the symptoms of Eczema?

**A:** While Eczema can look different from person to person, everyone shares one common symptom. The skin itches.

#### Q. Are there different types of Dermatitis/Eczema?

**A:** There are many types of Eczema depending on the location of the condition. Here's a brief description:

**Hand Eczema:** May first appear as dry chapped hands, and later develop into patches of red, scaly, itchy and inflamed skin, or even blisters.

**Contact Dermatitis:** Occurs from contact with everyday things such as food, jewelry or shampoos. It may be an immediate direct irritant or a delayed allergic rash.

**Dyshidrotic Dermatitis:** Occurs only on the palms of the hands, sides of the fingers, and soles of the feet, this common Eczema typically causes a burning or itching sensation and a blistering rash.

**Neurodermatitis** Occurs when nerve endings in the skin become irritated, triggering a severe itch-scratch-itch cycle. Common causes of nerve irritation include insect bites and emotional stress.

**Nummular Dermatitis:** The hallmark of this common eczema is unique, coin-shaped or oval lesions. It often does not itch.

**Occupational Dermatitis:** This is not one specific type of eczema, but rather any type of Eczema caused by things in a person's workplace.

**Seborrheic Dermatitis:** Occurs on the scalp as oily, waxy patches, this common type of rash sometimes spreads to the face and beyond. Dandruff and "cradle cap" fall under this classification.

**Stasis Dermatitis** Occurs in the lower legs, this is also common. A rash and occurs when circulation becomes sluggish. Poor blood flow causes fluids to build up, and the legs swell. Over time, this build-up of fluids affects the skin, causing a rash that sometimes itches, and may have painful sores and discolored skin.

#### Q: Is Eczema curable?

**A:** No, but it can be treated. You should see a dermatologist for treatment and follow the recommended skin care practices.

If you have questions or concerns or want to seek treatment for Eczema or any type of skin rash, call Dermatology Associates of the Lowcountry (843) 689-5259 (Hilton Head) or (843) 705-0840 (Bluffton / Okatie) to schedule a consultation. Remember, any abnormality of the skin should be looked at by a dermatologist.