

Introductory Disease Management Education

Learn About Eczema by Exploring the **Eczema Iceberg**

The information contained in this educational resource is intended to reinforce and supplement information you receive from your healthcare team. It is not a substitute for medical advice from your physician. If you have questions about the information you read in this educational resource, please discuss them with your healthcare provider.

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About This Brochure



The picture of an “iceberg” can help explain **eczema**.¹

That’s because with an iceberg, you can only see what’s on top. You can’t see what’s underneath.

With eczema, your symptoms can be seen above the iceberg—things like dry skin and itching.² But you can’t see what’s causing eczema under your skin—the bottom part of the iceberg!

What’s under your skin is called “inflammation,” and it’s what’s causing your symptoms.

Inflammation may still be occurring under your skin even when there may not be visible signs on your body.^{2,3}

That’s what’s happening below the eczema iceberg!

For people with eczema, this is just one “tip from the iceberg.” You’ll learn more about eczema from the helpful tips in this booklet.

The more you learn about your eczema, the more you can work with your doctor on your own care.⁴



A Tip From the Eczema Iceberg

Inflammation is a natural way your body fights infections when it needs to.⁵ But when inflammation is continuous, as with eczema, it causes harmful changes to your cells and leads to eczema symptoms.

What You Will Learn

Use this brochure to learn about:

- 1 Eczema as a chronic disease ... and what that means
- 2 What causes eczema
- 3 Eczema and other medical problems
- 4 The goals of eczema disease management
- 5 How eczema can affect your life

Information You Need to Know About Eczema

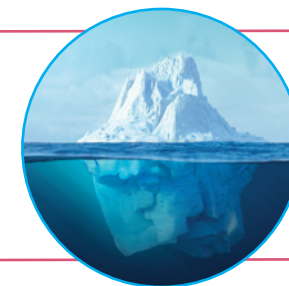
1 Eczema is a chronic disease



Eczema is a *chronic* disease.^{6,7} That means you may have it for your whole life. It may never go away.

Chronic also means that the inflammation under your skin may be there even when you don’t have any of these signs or symptoms^{2,3}:

- Very dry and itching skin⁷
- Reddening of the skin⁷
- Patches^{6,7}
- Fluids oozing from the affected areas⁶
- Bumps or sores⁷

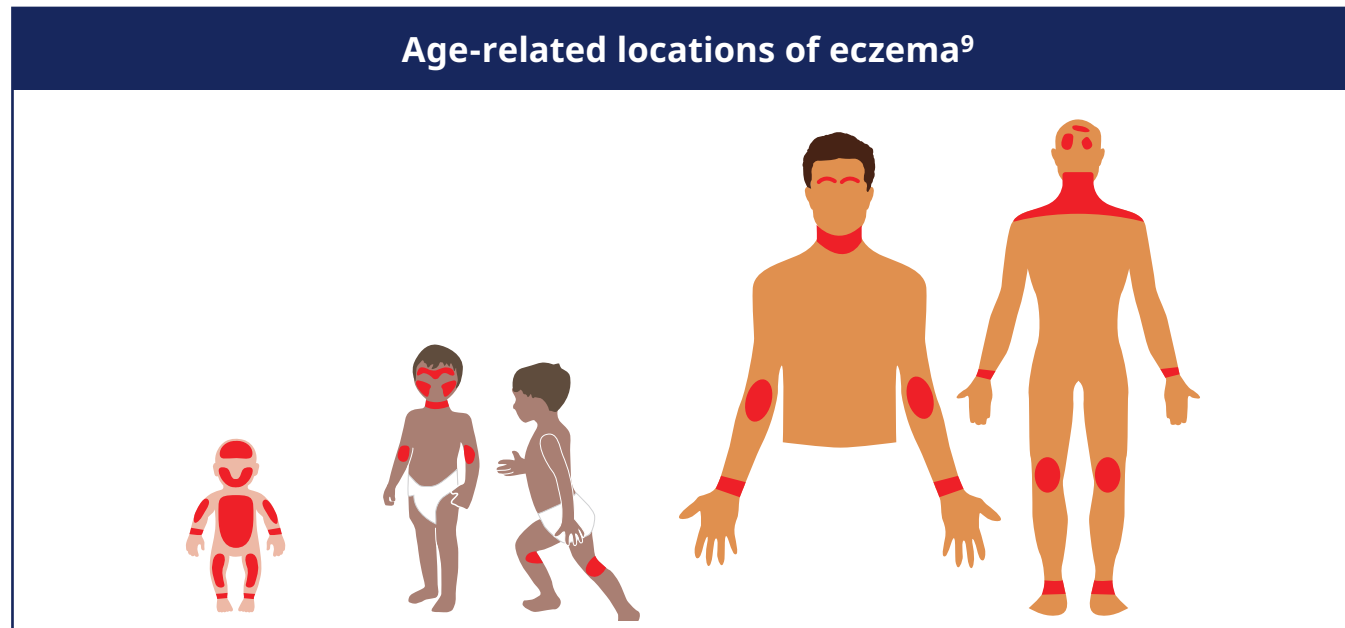


A Tip From the Eczema Iceberg

Sometimes people refer to eczema as atopic dermatitis. Atopic dermatitis is just one type of eczema.⁷

Eczema affects children and adults

Eczema usually appears in childhood first⁸; most patients with eczema have their first symptoms before the age of 5. But eczema symptoms are different depending on how old the patient is.⁹

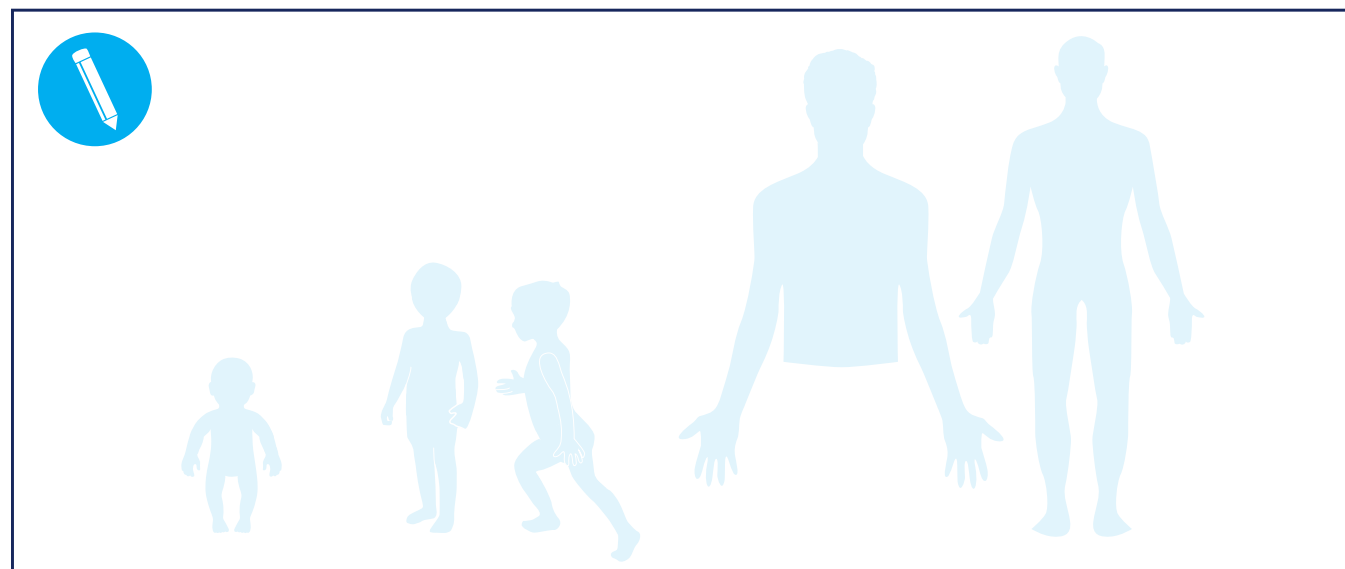


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In infants, eczema tends to appear on the face, limbs, and trunk. In children (age 1-2 years and up), eczema may appear on the skin on the inside of a joint that folds, for example, behind the knee.⁹ In adolescents and adults, eczema may appear on the wrists, ankles, and eyelids, as well as on the head, neck, and upper trunk; eczema signs may also appear on the shoulders and scalp.

Where do your eczema signs appear?

Mark the picture below exactly where you have eczema on your body and share this with your healthcare team.



2 The causes of eczema

What causes eczema?

You may think that problems on top of your skin may lead to eczema.¹⁰ But what's happening below your skin—under the eczema iceberg—may also cause the disease.

There are two main reasons why people get eczema:

1. The barrier of the skin is irregular in some way^{10,11}
2. There is inflammation under the skin^{10,11}








The causes of abnormal skin and inflammation can be difficult to understand.


Scientists believe that cells under the skin interact in ways that affect how your body fights off infections.^{10,11} This may cause inflammation. And inflammation is what leads to your eczema signs and symptoms.

Other causes of eczema

Your family's medical history may help explain your eczema.^{3,12} This includes genetic factors you're born with. But things in the environment may cause eczema or make it worse.¹¹

Environmental elements—also known as triggers—that may cause or worsen eczema include (but are not limited to)^{8,11,13-15}:

 Soap, bubble bath, and detergent with fragrance and perfumed products	 Wearing wool or rough fabrics next to the skin	 Stress
 Tobacco smoke, air pollution, bacteria, and mold	 Food allergies	 Hormones
		 Hot water

 There may be times when triggers will make your eczema worse.¹⁶ This is called a *flare*. Flares may be caused by external or internal triggers—such as food allergies, stress, or hormones.^{8,13-15} Flares may increase inflammation in the body and lead to a bad rash.¹⁶ Flares may require special treatments involving prescription drugs.⁸



A Tip From the Eczema Iceberg

It's important to identify your personal triggers so you can avoid them. Be sure to tell your doctor about them so they can be addressed in your disease management plan.

3 Eczema and other medical conditions

People with eczema may have other health problems.^{14,17,18} These may be physical or emotional.

But remember, not all people with eczema suffer these other medical problems. Every patient is different.

Be sure to speak with your doctor right away if you or your child have any of these problems.

4 The goals of eczema disease management

The two main goals of eczema disease management are: 1) reducing itch and irritation, and 2) keeping your skin moist and protected.^{8,19} Both are very important to help keep your eczema from getting worse.

How is eczema managed?

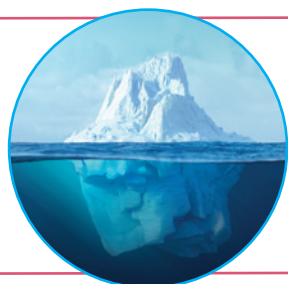


Your doctor may first have you use treatments you apply directly to your skin—treatments like creams, lotions, and ointments.²⁰ These are called “topical” treatments.²¹



Sometimes, “systemic” medications may also be used.²² These include medications like steroids or other drugs that might require an injection.^{22,23} Systemic treatments work inside the body; topical treatments work *outside* the body.^{21,24}

In general, the more serious your eczema is, the more likely it is that your doctor will prescribe systemic treatments.²²



A Tip From the Eczema Iceberg

Moisturizing your skin is a vital part of treatment. It's recommended that you apply moisturizer at least 2 to 3 times a day.¹⁹

5 How eczema can affect your life



Eczema may be difficult to live with.²⁵ Not only does it affect patients, but it may also affect the adults who care for them.

Eczema can be challenging to patients because it can be itchy and may also change the appearance of your skin.²⁵ Eczema often appears early in life.⁸ Many young patients may have feelings of embarrassment, social isolation, and helplessness.^{18,25} These feelings can affect patients' daily life like social or school activities.

Eczema can also be challenging to adults who care for children with the condition.²⁵ They may be frustrated because they're unable to help young patients manage the symptoms such as itch or sleepless nights.



A Tip From the Eczema Iceberg

Your doctor can help you deal with the challenges of living with eczema. Tell your healthcare team about your issues so they can help you to cope with obstacles that may be interfering with daily life.

Resources for People With Eczema



National Eczema Association (NEA)

www.nationaleczema.org

International Alliance of Dermatology Patient Organizations (IADPO)

www.globalskin.org

Society for Pediatric Dermatology (SPD)

www.pedsderm.net

American Academy of Dermatology (AAD)

www.aad.org



Preparing for Your Next Appointment With Your Healthcare Professional (HCP)

Your next appointment:

Healthcare professional: _____

Date: _____

Arrival Time: _____

Location: _____



List the questions you would like to talk to your HCP about at your next visit:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Common Eczema Signs and Symptoms

Itch^{6,7}

Redness⁷

Dry skin⁷

Patches⁷

Inflammation²

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