

Dermatitis

(Eczema)

What causes dermatitis?

Dermatitis is a harmless but annoying rash. It results from a combination of causes and is not contagious. Think of dermatitis as skin "misbehaving."

Treatment

Dermatitis is treated by applying a cortisone-type medicine. Your skin should start to improve within a week; but treatment will take longer. As long as you follow directions, cortisone medicines are safe to use on the skin until your rash clears up.

Skin suffering from dermatitis is easily irritated. Treat it gently. Avoid any soap on the involved areas. Use mild bar soaps such as Dove, Tone, or Purpose. Home remedies, over-the-counter medicines, and your neighbor's treatment suggestions rarely help and often make matters worse. Don't use them!

Please follow these directions:

1. Apply small amounts of cortisone to your skin as often as directed on the label. Massage it in gently but thoroughly.
2. Do not apply anything to your rash except (1) water, (2) the medicine prescribed for you, and bland lubricants such as: Lubriderm, Curel, Neutrogena, Aveeno, or plain Vaseline. If your skin is dry you may lubricate as often as you like. Lubricate 15-20 minutes after applying the prescribed medicine.
3. **Keep soap away from dermatitis.** If you shower, it's all right to use a little soap on normal skin. Be sure to rinse it off well. **Avoid hot water** as this also is irritating to your skin.
4. Wool and other rough clothing may aggravate dermatitis. Wear something smooth and soft next to your skin.
5. If your dermatitis doesn't improve with these measures, please call and make an appointment.
6. Keep your medicines and this sheet even after your dermatitis has cleared because dermatitis tends to come back. If it does, resume the original treatment.

Caution: *Cortisone medicines are to be used only on dermatitis.* They may actually worsen other rashes such as athlete's foot or impetigo. Strong cortisone ointments may cause rashes when used on the face and may result in thinning of your skin when applied to skin-fold areas. Use your cortisone only for treating dermatitis, and only for the areas prescribed.

