

Eczema is a chronic skin condition but, as the saying goes, one size does not fit all. While common symptoms include dry, scaly skin, redness and itchiness that may be intense, there are in fact seven different types of eczema, all of which have their own unique characteristics and triggers.



Atopic Dermatitis / Atopic Eczema

Fact: The most common form of eczema, it usually starts in childhood and can be long-lasting.

Symptoms: A rash often forms in the creases of the elbows or knees; skin in rash areas may turn lighter or darker or get thicker; small bumps may appear and leak fluid if scratched; babies often get the rash on their scalp and cheeks; the skin can get infected if scratched.

Causes: Genetic factors, dry skin, immune system problems, environmental triggers.



Contact Dermatitis

Fact: The skin becomes inflamed after coming into contact with a substance that irritates or triggers an allergic reaction.

Symptoms: The skin itches, burns and stings; hives (itchy bumps) may pop up; fluid-filled blisters may ooze and crust over; the skin may thicken over time and feel scaly or leathery.

Causes: Common irritants or allergens include detergents, bleach, jewellery, latex, nickel, paint, poisonous plants, skin care products, soaps and perfumes, solvents, tobacco smoke.



Dyshidrotic Eczema

Fact: More common in women than men (along with younger adults), it causes small blisters to form on the hands and feet

Symptoms: Fluid-filled blisters form that may itch or hurt; the skin can scale, crack and flake.

Causes: Allergies, damp hands and feet, stress, exposure to substances such as nickel, cobalt or chromium salt.



Neurodermatitis

Fact: Similar to atopic dermatitis but usually confined to one or two patches of skin and rarely goes away without treatment.

Symptoms: Thick, scaly patches form on the arms, legs, back of neck, scalp, bottom of feet, backs of hands or genitals; can be particularly itchy when relaxed or asleep; scratching patches can lead to bleeding and infection.

Causes: Doctors are not certain exactly what causes Neurodermatitis but stress can be a trigger. Commonly seen in people who have other types of eczema.



Discoid Eczema

Fact: Round, coin-shaped spots form on the skin. More common in males than females and more likely to affect people who have another type of eczema.

Symptoms: Coin-shaped lesions on arms, legs, torso and/or hands; itching and burning; lesions may ooze liquid or crust over; red, pinkish or brown scaly and inflamed skin around the lesions.

Causes: Dry skin, reaction to an insect bites, allergic reaction to metal or chemicals



Stasis Dermatitis

Fact: Associated with poor circulation in the lower legs, with fluid leaking out of weakened veins into the skin to cause swelling, redness, itching and pain. Most common in people older than 50.

Symptoms: Lower part of legs may swell; legs may ache or feel heavy; sufferers likely to also have varicose veins and skin that is dry and itchy; open sores may develop on lower legs and tops of feet.

Causes: Varicose veins, high blood pressure, obesity, vein surgeries, multiple pregnancies, history of blood clots in legs, congestive heart failure, kidney failure, little physical activity, jobs that require excessive sitting or standing.



Seborrhoeic Dermatitis

Fact: Appears where there are a lot of oil-producing glands like the upper back, nose and scalp. Most common in infants or adults aged 30 to 60 and while it normally clears on its own in infants, it usually follows a pattern of flaring and clearing for years in adults.

Symptoms: Infants most often have scaly, greasy patches on their scalps (aka cradle cap) and can also develop it on their bottoms. Teens and adults can develop redness, swelling and greasy scaling in areas including the eyebrows, sides of nose, mid-chest, upper back and armpits.

Causes: Stress, hormonal changes, illness, harsh detergents, solvents, chemicals and soaps, cold, dry weather, some medications including psoralen, interferon and lithium.

Eczema Support Australia provides support to Australians who are significantly impacted by chronic eczema and other atopic or allergic conditions. The registered charity believes all families and individuals living with these chronic conditions deserve our community support and is guided by the three pillars of: **1. Advocacy 2. Connection 3. Information**