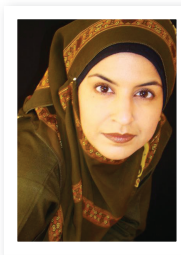


Under my Skin



OUR SKIN IS OUR BIGGEST ORGAN, IT PROTECTS US FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD, HELPS REGULATE OUR TEMPERATURE AND HELPS THROW OFF TOXINS, BUT IT'S ALSO AN INDICATOR AS TO WHAT'S GOING ON INSIDE OF US....SHOWING US SIGNS THAT SOMETHING INSIDE NEEDS OUR ATTENTION. NATUROPATH SARAH RAHMAN TAKES A LOOK...

ECZEMA

There are different types of eczema and treatments vary for each, as do its causes; the most common type is atopic eczema. This type of eczema is characterized by areas of skin which are scaly and unbearably itchy. It is non-contagious and sufferers often have episodes of relapse over long periods of time. It generally tends to appear around the elbows, knees (flexures), legs and face. Atopic eczema often runs in families and there is usually occurrence of other atopic diseases like hay fever. It is common in both adults and children.

The itchiness experienced is due to an over enthusiastic response of the person's immune system to certain allergens. When a bout of atopic eczema is severe it is difficult to resist scratching; when the affected area is scratched it can lead to dark patches of thickened skin. Scratching can also lead to a breakdown of the affected skin causing it to become infected and this can result in an increase in localised irritation.

Food intolerances (often called allergies) are very common in a large number of people, especially those suffering eczema. When a person consumes foods to which they are intolerant, a milder form of an allergic reaction occurs in the body. Not all foods will cause eczema to flare-up in everyone, and the reactions that do occur will be different. There are some foods that are commonly known for causing problems for people who suffer with eczema. These

trigger foods; include wheat, dairy products (especially cow's milk), citrus fruits, eggs, nuts and shellfish.

There are many tests for food intolerances and allergies. Different therapists prefer different methods, I personally use Bio-resonance testing and on the whole I find it to be accurate and quick as it gives me immediate results on which to base a programme for my client. If you wish to do some detective work on your own, then it's best to keep a diary.

Keeping a food diary can help to determine which particular foods are

causing you a problem. To be effective this diary must be very detailed and must include information such as what you ate, as well as the quantity, some

foods take a while to show their effects so it's important to record the time you ate the food too. By documenting in detail you can better determine if a particular food is a trigger for you or not. Detailed food diaries can also be helpful when discussing your condition with your doctor or naturopath.

Orthodox treatments for atopic eczema consist of topical aqueous creams that help hydrate the skin and steroids, taken orally.

A great way to help your eczema

through diet is by adopting a healthy skin eating regime. Include foods such as olive oil, avocados, and seeds that are high in essential fatty acids and reduce foods with 'bad' fats such as hydrogenated (artificially hardened) margarines.

Introduce oily fish into your diet twice a week, these include, mackerel, herring, sardines, pilchards and kippers. These foods rich in Omega 3 fatty acids will help reduce the inflammation associated with eczema. Establishing a diet which is rich in nutrients and antioxidants will help support your skin's function. Consume organic raw fruit and vegetables, varying the colours of what you eat.

Ensure you are drinking an adequate amount of water, ideally filtered water, approximately two litres daily.

Natural Treatments

To determine the root cause of your eczema your naturopath or health care practitioner will most often conduct an in-depth consultation, so your treatment plan is specific to you. However there are a few

herbs and essential oils that have shown the potential to be very effective at relieving the symptoms of eczema.

Yellow Dock is a great skin cleanser; use it in combination with Echinacea, the

recommended dosage is a teaspoon of the combined herbs to one cup water, one cup to be taken three times a day.

Lavender is especially effective at relieving the itching that accompanies this skin complaint.

Tea tree oil is very popular due to its ability to clear up any infection of eczema patches due to scratching, dilute it in carrier oil before application e.g. 6 drops essential oil to 10mls olive oil.

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