

The Allergy & Asthma Clinic

www.TheAllergyClinic.com

Andrew C. Engler, M.D.

290 Baldwin Avenue, San Mateo, California 94401

(650) 343-4597 FAX (650) 343-3402

Newsletter www.theallergyclinic.com December 2023

Eczema or Atopic Dermatitis

Atopic dermatitis is a common allergic condition and is often referred to as eczema. This condition is often chronic and is associated with inflammation, redness, and irritation of the skin. It usually begins in childhood, but it can occur at any age, including adulthood. The chance of developing atopic dermatitis is higher if there is a family history of atopic dermatitis, hay fever, or asthma.

Now that we know the cause(s), what can be done to get relief? For many, itching occurs as a result of a combination of factors and ideally, a multi-faceted approach should be considered.

- Make sure that the humidity in your home is no more than 50%. If it is, consider running a dehumidifier during the winter months.
- Replace the furnace filters every winter, preferably a MERV 13 or higher.
- Make sure that dust control measures are in place in your home, especially in the bedroom.
- Use hypoallergenic moisturizers/creams. These products should be applied within 1 minute after getting out of the tub or shower. Switch to hypoallergenic detergents and because they can be irritating to the skin, avoid fabric softeners.
- Avoid substances which have been associated with symptoms in the past (i.e., nickel or products with parabens or fragrances).
- Apply medicated creams as prescribed. As a general rule, topical steroids should not be used on the same area of the skin for more than 7 consecutive days. In recent years, many patients have done well with non-steroid creams such as Elidel, Eucrisa or Protopic, and unlike topical steroids, these products can be used safely for weeks at a time.
- If you are on them, make sure that you are getting your allergy shots/drops consistently.

REMINDER: Please let us know any changes in your insurance. Our insurance staff will be more than happy to update your insurance information.

Thank you for being a part of our allergy family. We hope that the holiday season brings us love and memories to last a lifetime. In observance of the Holidays, our San Mateo office will be closed on Monday, December 25, 2023 and Monday, January 1, 2024



WHY IS MY ITCHY SKIN WORSE IN THE WINTER?

During this time of the year, we see a number of patients presenting with itching of the skin, skin rashes, and even hives. One common cause is cold weather, which can exacerbate dry skin. Cold air can draw moisture out of the top layers of the skin and in general, the dryer your skin is, the more you are likely to itch. As temperatures drop, many start using forced air heating systems, often leading to dry indoor heat, with low humidity levels. To make things worse, to prevent respiratory illnesses, we are constantly washing our hands, further aggravating dry skin,

WHAT OTHER FACTORS CAN CAUSE ITCHY SKIN?

Environmental Allergens: Itching can also occur as a result of exposure to environmental allergens, such as pollen, dust mite, mold and animal dander. During this time of the year, pollen counts are typically very low, but unfortunately, mold and dust mite level can be quite high.

Contact Allergens: Allergic skin reaction. One of the most common substances that can cause an allergic skin reaction is nickel, which is found in many products, including costume jewelry, eyeglass frames, zippers, belt buckles and buttons. There are those who can also be allergic to ingredients found in many personal care products such as parabens, fragrances and petroleum. If you think you may have an allergy to one of these substances, speak with one of our staff about undergoing patch testing to look for evidence of a contact allergy.