



Understanding Dermatitis
By Rick L. Moore, MD
Board-certified Dermatologist

Dermatitis is an itchy red area of skin that appears as a rash. The specific look changes depending on how long the dermatitis has been present or the cause of the dermatitis. While it is not contagious or life threatening, it can cause extreme discomfort.

There are several types of dermatitis, including:

- ❑ *Seborrheic dermatitis* results in yellow and white scales primarily in areas with oily skin like on the scalp and face. This condition is commonly the cause of dandruff.
- ❑ *Contact dermatitis* occurs upon exposure to certain allergens or irritants, including detergents, cleaners, metals, cosmetics, plants, and numerous other chemicals.
- ❑ *Atopic dermatitis*, more commonly known as eczema, describes an itchy rash that flares intermittently. The cause is unknown but there is a genetic predisposition.
- ❑ *Stasis dermatitis* is most commonly found on the lower legs. It is often seen in people that have poor circulation or fluid build-up in the legs.
- ❑ *Asteatotic dermatitis* is seen in patients with dry skin. The skin barrier breaks down to the point that a rash develops. This is more common in the winter when the air is drier and skin is more commonly exposed to indoor heating.
- ❑ *Nummular dermatitis* is in the form of small circular patches of extremely itchy skin that are common on the arms and legs. Overly dry skin often causes this type of dermatitis.

Some of these conditions share many of the same traits and root causes; therefore, it is important to receive a proper diagnosis from your dermatologist to ensure effective treatment. In the case of contact dermatitis, allergy patch testing may be required to determine what substances are causing the reaction.

Most forms of dermatitis can be treated with over the counter medications, such as hydrocortisone cream and moisturizers. However, for more severe dermatitis, prescription strength medications may be needed.

Dermatitis is one of the most common skin disorders treated in a dermatologist's office. If you suffer from any of the symptoms listed above, I urge you to schedule an appointment for an evaluation.

Dr. Rick Moore is a board-certified dermatologist practicing at the new Watson Clinic office in Zephyrhills at 6901 Medical View Lane. Immediate appointments are available by calling 813-788-7867.