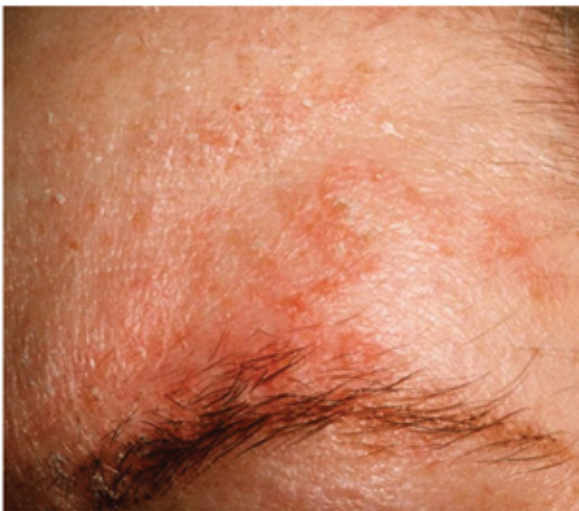




SEBORRHEIC DERMATITIS: DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

By Casey Watkins, MD

Seborrheic dermatitis (seb-uh-ree-ick dur-muh-tahy-tis) is a common skin disease that causes pink or red, scaly, itchy patches on the skin. These areas can also be swollen and greasy or moist in appearance. White or yellowish crusty scales can flake off. Most often it occurs in patches where the skin is oily, such as the scalp, sides of nose, eyebrows, ears, and eyelids. Other areas that can be involved are the chest, navel, buttocks, underarms, and groin. This condition is easily treated but can be chronic. Seborrheic dermatitis is a condition that dermatologists frequently diagnose and treat.



Who gets seborrheic dermatitis?

Seborrheic dermatitis affects people of all ages. It occurs most often in infants and older adults. In most infants, the condition appears on the scalp (cradle cap). Scaly, greasy patches form on the baby's scalp. These patches are harmless and not contagious. Babies also get seborrheic dermatitis in the diaper area. People may confuse it for a diaper rash. No matter where the dermatitis forms, it tends to clear up without treatment between 8 to 12 months of age.

In adults, this condition tends to come and go and can be life-long. In teens and adults, it often first occurs as scalp scaling (dandruff). Elderly



patients are also prone to getting seborrheic dermatitis. Flare-ups can happen when the weather is dry and cold. Stress also can trigger a flare-up or make it worse. The good news is that treatment can reduce flare-ups and bring relief.

Seborrheic dermatitis is also more common in:

- People who have a family member with seborrheic dermatitis
- Men than women
- People who have oily skin or hair
- People with acne or psoriasis (another skin condition that can cause skin scaling)
- People with HIV/AIDS, Parkinson's disease, alcoholism, or eating disorders (anorexia nervosa or bulimia)

Researchers are still studying what causes seborrheic dermatitis. They have found that seborrheic dermatitis is not caused by poor hygiene and is not an allergy. There seems to be many factors that work together to cause this skin condition. This may include the presence of a yeast-like organism that lives normally on our skin and an excess release of oil from the skin. Genes, climate, stress, and how sensitive a person's immune system is may also play a part.

Diagnosis

If you think you may have seborrheic dermatitis, you should make an appointment with your dermatologist for a diagnosis. Seborrheic dermatitis can look like psoriasis, eczema, or even an allergic

reaction. A dermatologist can diagnosis seborrheic dermatitis by reviewing the patient's medical history and examining the rash and the way it looks and where it is on the body. Those with chronic seborrheic dermatitis that do not respond to treatment may need additional medical tests to rule out another skin disease. Sometimes the seborrheic dermatitis could be a sign of an underlying medical condition.

Treatment

There is no way to cure or prevent seborrheic dermatitis. However, treatment with prescription medication and/or non-prescription products can help to control it. Gentle shampoo can help infants with cradle cap. Adults often need to use a medicated shampoo or a stronger medicated cream that is prescribed. A dermatologist will advise you on which medicine is your best treatment. Seborrheic dermatitis may get better on its own. This skin condition can often improve quickly with daily treatment.

To schedule an appointment for a skin exam with one of our providers, please call us at any of our three convenient locations. You may also visit our website for more information at www.tricitiesderm.com

Seborrheic dermatitis. (n.d.). Retrieved November 06, 2017, from <https://www.aad.org/public/diseases/scaly-skin/seborrheic-dermatitis>

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