



Shining a Light on the Burden of Eczema

Director's Message



Across Canada, we welcome the (final!) arrival of summer. In this issue, expert psychologist Dr. Shawn Reynolds discusses how mental health can be impacted by eczema, and provides some strategies to help you or your child better cope with stress, and Dr. Ian Tin Yue Wong shares his tips on how to choose a sunscreen for sensitive skin.

We are also pleased to announce a new Seal of Acceptance shampoo for sensitive scalp, recap our Spring My Life with Eczema education events, and feature a new Share your Story column by Françoise about her struggle with - and eventual control over - hand eczema. We hope you learn as much as we did.

Wishing everyone good health,

Amanda

Amanda Cresswell-Melville
Executive Director
Eczema Society of Canada

Ask the Expert

Psychologist offers advice to ease burden of living with eczema



Eczema Society of Canada reached out to registered psychologist Dr. Shawn Reynolds for some tips on managing eczema from a mental health perspective.

Q: *I have hand eczema and my daughter lives with atopic dermatitis that covers most of her body. We find managing this condition to be very stressful. What can we do to manage the mental health aspects of the condition?*

A: The recent Eczema Society of Canada Quality of Life survey found some startling information about mental health and eczema (atopic dermatitis). They found that almost 2 out of 3 (64%) of people with atopic dermatitis had anxiety about it, and almost half (44%) experienced depression related to their symptoms.

Here are some strategies to help you stay happy and healthy despite eczema:

1) Give yourself a break.

Most of us experience a variety of different stressors in our lives. Stress can often come from our social relationships, as well as our work, finances, kids and/or parents. Eczema can add to this stress. People who experience chronic symptoms often can have a 'shorter fuse' than people who do not; this is because symptoms build on other stressors. Think about it like this: When you get a bad night's sleep, you are more likely to be irritable the next day. The lack of sleep doesn't make you irritable, but it gives you less ability to manage small annoying things. When a person with eczema is experiencing stress from poor sleep, pain related to itching, or frustration about itching, they are more likely to be irritable, show anxiety, or simply be sad about it. But, knowing about this can help you take the pressure off yourself. Saying "I am having a flare-up, so I need to avoid other stressful situations" may help.

2) Do fun things that aren't affected by your eczema.

We know that focusing on the eczema tends to make us feel worse; no one ever says: "If I just stare at this itchy patch for a few more minutes, I should be fine!" In the same way, doing things that pull our attention away from it can also help. It's important to take stock of the things you most enjoy that are not affected too much by your eczema - for example, dinner with friends, going to a movie, and/or doing physical activity. For a child, this could be a preferred activity such as crafting or drawing, playing with friends, or a special game.

3) Model healthy strategies and habits for your kids.

It can break our hearts when we see our children experience hardship. This is especially true with a condition like eczema, which is hard to manage for adults as well as kids. Showing them positive ways to manage it (like proper self-care, whether through medication, bathing, or other doctor-recommended strategies), as well as healthy ways to deal with stress (like the ideas above) can help them learn how to manage symptoms and negative feelings more effectively. For children with eczema, helping to make the skin care routine fun can help with adherence to your child's care plan. Rewarding children for applying their creams or ointments can be a good strategy.

4) We're not defined by eczema.

Eczema can impact every aspect of our life, so we want to make sure it doesn't control us or define who we are. You (or, your child) are more than your eczema! You may have to work to take power over it, but it will be worth it. If you need extra help, know that you can always get professional support through a psychologist or others to manage mental health challenges. Being active to take charge of your eczema is a healthy strategy. Don't let it take the fun out of your life!

Dr. Shawn Reynolds is a psychologist in the Edmonton region, who works in private practice and as a behavioural consultant in school settings. Dr. Reynolds volunteers with Eczema Society of Canada, as he personally copes with eczema. He is active in his church and runs a very slow half-marathon each year.

Summer Skin Care Tips from Dr. Ian Tin Yue Wong



While winter can be dry and harsh on eczema, summer brings its own set of challenges with hot, sweaty days, and it can be difficult to find sunscreens suitable for the sensitive skin of eczema. ESC asked Dr. Ian Tin Yue Wong about some summer skin tips.

Practice Safe Sun

Sunscreen can be a potential irritant for people with sensitive skin and eczema, but sun protection is still important. Avoiding the strongest sun of the day (between 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.), wearing a wide brim hat and long protective layers, and seeking shade should be the first steps for sun safety.

Select the Right Sunscreen

There are two types of sunscreens - chemical filters and physical blocks. Physical blocks are the type generally recommended for people with eczema. Ingredients to look for are titanium dioxide and zinc oxide. These sunscreens create a physical block on the surface of the skin and help to protect it by reflecting the sun's damaging rays. Generally speaking, people with eczema may find they prefer choosing a sunscreen that is both fragrance-free and cream based, over spray-on formulations, as they may be more moisturizing and less irritating to the skin.

Stay Cool

Avoid overheating and sweating when possible, including avoiding the strongest sun of the day. Air conditioning can be helpful, as can keeping babies and children in the shade.

Keep Active

Swimming can be a good activity to stay cool and active at the time, but remember to shower off after swimming, and apply a moisturizer as soon as possible after the shower or bath. Also, if you are swimming outdoors, remember to reapply your sunscreen every two hours.

Dr. Ian Tin Yue Wong is a Dermatology Resident Physician training at the University of British Columbia where he will undergo an intensive five-year program of advanced medical and surgical training in the prevention, recognition, and treatment of diseases of the skin, hair, and nails. Before medical school, Ian also trained and practiced as a community pharmacist. Today, he integrates his knowledge of pharmacology and pharmaceutical care to optimize medical care for the skin patient community.

DUCRAY sensinol shampoo earns ESC Seal

ESC Seal of Acceptance Announcement



Eczema Society of Canada (ESC) is pleased to announce that DUCRAY sensinol shampoo has earned the Seal. DUCRAY sensinol shampoo is created for people with sensitive skin and scalp and is a suitable choice for people living with eczema.

All products that have earned the ESC Seal are free from known irritants and are suitable for sensitive skin. Each product undergoes rigorous review by dermatologists, where ingredients and formulation concentrations as well as clinical data are analyzed.

To learn more about the ESC Seal of Acceptance visit www.eczemahelp.ca

About DUCRAY sensinol shampoo

This gentle and soothing shampoo calms the most sensitive scalps. Its high-safety, hypoallergenic formula relieves itching and discomfort after the first use and provides immediate comfort.

For more information, visit:

<https://www.ducray.com/en-ca/sensinol/sensinol-physio-protective-shampoo>

Share your Story Feature

Francoise's journey with hand eczema



I have had eczema (atopic dermatitis) now and again throughout my life, but it was mostly mild to moderate and it was manageable. However, in the last few years my hands have flared up worse than ever. I had experienced eczema on my hands before, but it was mild. This time it was different, it was very severe - the skin became dry, itchy and very inflamed. The skin would crack, bleed and cause me incessant pain. After some time, the skin became thickened. I was even wondering if my fingerprints would be altered.

I went to see my family doctor for help and I tried many creams, none of which seemed to help. The painful hand eczema continued. I tried to manage it with a very arduous routine of applying treatments and then putting on cotton gloves. I would then have to apply creams throughout my work day, and at night I would apply petroleum and then put on cotton gloves again. This severe hand eczema was impacting my life significantly. As an artist I work with paints, inks and clays, all of which made my hand eczema worse and creating my art became difficult and painful. I had to make choices and stop some activities all together; hoping the elimination of contact with certain mediums would help. I am also an avid golfer and would have to apply creams, wear cotton gloves, and then cover the cotton gloves with my golf gloves. It was painful to hold to the golf club, but I couldn't imagine a life where I had to give up all my favourite activities.

After my family doctor had exhausted all his resources, I requested he refer me to a dermatologist - which would change my life. The dermatologist was able to offer me a new oral medication. I tried it

and it was very simple - a once a day pill that cleared my hands within three months.

I feel like I got my life back. Soon after experiencing clear hands I was able to caress the back of our 9-month-old grandson - something I had not been able to do since he was born due to my rough hands. I didn't realize how bad my hand eczema was, until I saw how good it could be.

Life with Eczema Education Event Recap

Flare management and new treatments were the hot topics at cross Canada events



This past April, Canadians from across the country joined the Eczema Society of Canada at the Spring "Life with Eczema" education events. Taking place in Toronto, Montreal and Calgary, each city welcomed patients and their caregivers to learn about topics including managing flares, hand eczema, and updates on research advancements and new treatments.

Attendees heard from Canadian dermatologists, and each talk highlighted the importance of dealing with inflammation, as well as the exciting advancements in treatments for Canadian patients.

"We at the ESC are thrilled that Canadians will have access to new and varied treatments available in Canada. It has been over a decade since we've had anything new available to patients, and the fact that there will be new options for patients living eczema really gives hope to all sufferers," said Amanda Cresswell-Melville, Executive Director, Eczema Society of Canada.

The Eczema Society of Canada would like to thank event sponsors including Actelion (a Janssen Pharmaceutical Company of Johnson & Johnson), Sanofi Genzyme Canada, and Aveeno Eczema Care for providing gift bags to all participants.



2017 Research Grant Recipient Announcement

Research Grant Update



Eczema Society of Canada (ESC) is proud to announce that our 2017 competitive research grant recipient is Dr. Aaron Drucker for his research study on the suicide risk in atopic dermatitis (AD) patients. Dr. Drucker's research will be conducted at Women's College Hospital in Toronto, and is North America's first study to investigate suicide risk in atopic dermatitis patients

"Skin conditions are more than skin deep, that's the cliché, but if people are losing their lives, there may be an opportunity to intervene," Dr. Drucker says.

Mental health is significantly impacted by atopic dermatitis, with more than 30 per cent of AD patients having a co-morbid diagnosis of depression or anxiety (survey results from the National Eczema Association). The impact and burden of AD is often underestimated, and patients indicate the disease is debilitating and life-altering.

"If we find an association [between AD and suicide], there could be opportunities to develop and test interventions for patients at the highest risk for mental illness and suicide," says Dr. Drucker.

ESC is proud to support atopic dermatitis research, and 100% of private citizen donations go directly to fund our research grants. ESC is now accepting grant applications for the 2018 competitive research grant program, with an application deadline of September 1st 2018. They will be awarded in November in honor of Eczema Awareness Month.

Remember, it's okay to ask for help. If you are experiencing anxiety, depression, or any other mental health issue, please see your doctor. If you are in crisis, please visit your local emergency department or call 911.

It's okay to ask for help - you aren't alone.

A Report from the American Academy of Dermatology Meeting

Recent treatments advancements make for an exciting time for atopic dermatitis patients

San Diego, CA - After a decade long period of no new options for atopic dermatitis patients, there is finally great hope for patients with moderate to severe atopic dermatitis. At the 2018 American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) annual meeting, dermatologist Dr. Robert Sidbury, Division Chief of Dermatology at Seattle Children's Hospital, shared recent developments in treatments for atopic dermatitis. Specifically, he spoke about dupilumab, the first biologic treatment for atopic dermatitis that is now available in Canada, as well as a new topical treatment that is not yet approved in Canada. New therapies for the treatment of eczema signal a new era of care and hope for patients who have been suffering without options.

To learn more about the American Academy of Dermatology visit www.aad.org

We're making a difference,
and you can help us reach our goals.

Every step toward research is a step toward a cure



We desperately need better care and more research for eczema, and you can help. Eczema Society of Canada (ESC) is furthering Canadian eczema research through our Research Grant Program. In the past year ESC has funded two university centre research projects. Each and every one of your donations (that's 100% of private citizen donations) go directly to eczema research grants through our grant program. All donations \$20 and greater are eligible for an official tax receipt, and no donation is too small.

Eczema Society of Canada is partnered with Canada Helps for secure online donations. Donate now through [Canada Helps](#).



Together we are making a difference.

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Hope

"For support and resources, there is no finer organization than the Eczema Society of Canada."

Maryam Sanati, Editor-in-chief, Chatelaine Magazine