



Focusing on advocacy and awareness

Director's message



This September, ESC is taking action and we need your help! Over the summer, our role to help our community and be a voice for eczema sufferers took center stage. Dupilumab (brand name Dupixent), a new treatment which holds promise for patients living with moderate-to-severe eczema, encountered a significant roadblock on its path to public funding.

We are dedicated to improving care for Canadians living with eczema and we are taking action to advocate for patients. We have received an overwhelming amount of feedback on how this decision could impact patients - the real people living with eczema. We are grateful to have received numerous emails and call from patients who want to get involved, share their story, advocate for patients, and make a difference. If you would like to join this effort, please reach out to us.

In this newsletter we are pleased to announce the launch of our new advocacy section on our website eczemahelp.ca. This resource shows you how to contact your elected officials, get involved, and help advocate for all Canadians impacted by eczema.

We also invite you to register for our annual Life with Eczema educational events, taking place this October across Canada. Our "Ask the Doctor" column covers a common back-to-school issue, and we also share a mother's struggle to find an expert who could diagnose and treat her son's eczema.

Eczema is a journey and a good place to start is reaching out for support and sharing your experience. As always, we are here to help. Please consider contacting us today - you can make a difference!

Wishing you good health,

Amanda Cresswell-Melville

Join us in Vancouver, Toronto, and Halifax!

Life with eczema FREE educational events



Interested in learning more about eczema? Join us this October in Vancouver, Toronto or Halifax, and hear from dermatology experts on taking control of your eczema, and the latest advancements and new treatments. Each session will also feature patient stories and an audience Q&A, so bring your questions for our experts.

The first 50 people to register and attend the event in each city will receive a Bioderma skin care gift bag.

VANCOUVER - Thursday, October 11th

October 11 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

Vancouver Public Library, 350 West Georgia,
Alice MacKay Room Vancouver, BC, V6B 6B1 Canada
[+ Google Map](#)

TORONTO - Monday, October 15th

October 15 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

Toronto Public Library - Northern District, 40 Orchard View Blvd
Toronto, ON M4R1B9 Canada
[+ Google Map](#)

HALIFAX - Tuesday, October 23rd

October 23 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

Halifax Central Library, 5440 Spring Garden Road, Room 301
Halifax, NS Canada
[+ Google Map](#)

Register today by emailing RSVP@eczema-help.ca or call 1-855-ECZEMA-1

Register Today

ESC launches patient advocacy web page

New online resource now available



We want to give you the opportunity to raise your voice and share your experience of living with atopic dermatitis and eczema. Patient advocacy helps improve access to health care and treatments, and we hope you will join us to help educate the general public, government, and drug plan payers (both private and public) about the burden of eczema, current gaps in care, and the needs of our patient community.

How can you help?

Advocating for yourself, your loved ones, and those in your community, is an important part of making sure that decision-makers have the right information when making decisions that impact patients. Sharing your story is an important first step to making a difference, and this means writing to your elected officials and ministers of health so they know what is important to you and your family. If policymakers have more knowledge and awareness about eczema and patient needs, they can make better decisions that will help improve patient lives.

Visit our advocacy page today to learn more: eczemahelp.ca

Share your story feature

A family's journey to find the right doctor who understood their son's eczema

Janet is the mother of Timothy, a child who has eczema. She saw our Facebook post asking for sufferers and caregivers to share their stories, and she graciously offered to share her story.



"My name is Janet, and my son Timothy has eczema.

When Timothy was born, he had beautiful skin and was a happy baby. When he was about 3.5 months old, he started to develop spots on his face, head and torso. It began to spread to his back and legs a few weeks later.

Timothy saw many doctors. We took him to see his family doctor, as well as another physician who was filling in for his primary doctor when she went on holidays. We also went to the clinic in our town twice, and the emergency room twice (when the spots became so large and began to look infected). It was at this final emergency room visit that we were referred to a pediatrician in another

town (we do not have any in our town), who referred us to a dermatologist.

Getting the appointment for our dermatologist took almost an entire year (making Timothy around a one and a half when he finally saw a specialist). During this time we discovered that he was allergic to penicillin (after taking the medication he turned bright red and was having difficulty breathing - leading to another emergency room visit lasting over 24 hrs). While we waited to see a dermatologist, each doctor we saw in-between prescribed him a different medication.

It was extremely frustrating that it took so long to get a proper diagnosis; we felt the doctors were not familiar enough with the condition, and it took a long time for us to find control. Due to his age, and the fact that he had multiple infections, we were surprised Timothy wasn't seen more quickly and treated appropriately. We feel that his situation could have been better managed had we had access to physicians with better knowledge of this complex condition.

I have very few photos of my son between 4 months and 2 years of age due to his severe eczema. This makes me very sad now, as I realize how many memories and photo opportunities I did not take because of his appearance.

We have had other flare-ups over the months and years but nothing as extreme as his first episode. Timothy is now four years old and will be starting school in September. These days, I keep his eczema under control for the most part (he always has spots, but they are manageable) with multiple moisturizing cream applications each day, medication, steroid creams when needed, and we keep him in 100% cotton clothing at ALL times.

Education for doctors is so important and, in my opinion, would help so many families. If eczema could be diagnosed properly and as early as possible, individuals could start medical care that can help. I consider myself very lucky with the current status of my son's eczema, as I know the challenges some parents deal with daily.

While I am nervous about what will occur when he starts school (and does not have someone who can apply cream whenever he becomes itchy), I am hopeful that he will be able to have 'normal' experiences that other children have."

- Janet Rodin, mother of Timothy

If you would like to share your story as well, contact us at info@eczemahelp.ca

How to pick skincare products

3 tips to making the right choice



No one has perfect skin, but choosing the perfect products for your skin type is easier than you think. Here, Dr. Joseph Lam, a Vancouver-based clinical assistant professor in pediatrics and dermatology, offers his top tips when it comes to choosing the right skin care products.

1. Natural does not equal better. "There's an artificial divide between natural and artificial products. Just because something is natural, doesn't mean it gets a free pass," explains Dr. Lam. He says poison ivy is a great example - it's completely natural, but if you put it on your skin you'll definitely get a bad reaction. Keep this in mind and remember that you can experience an allergic reaction even with natural products, many of which are still being tested for use on the skin. Ever-popular olive oil was shown to cause redness in a recent study, making coconut oil a better choice.

2. "Free" isn't always necessary. Always looking for sulfate-free, paraben-free, SLS-free, and whatever the latest "free" trend is? Don't worry - Dr. Lam says despite widespread alarm, not everything that's taken out of products needs to be. "It's good to have media and social awareness about what goes into the products we put on our skin, but there's a gap between science and public perception of many ingredients." He assures that concerns over parabens and sulfates aren't supported by good data, and reminds that if something is removed, it needs to be replaced with something else that may or may not be better.

3. Opt for something designed with you in mind. What works for your best friend may not perform the same miracles on you, so use common sense and pick products designed with your skin type in mind. For example, if you have sensitive skin or eczema look for products with the Eczema Society of Canada Seal of Acceptance. Products identified as accepted are free of ingredients known to be irritating for sensitive skin and have undergone dermatologist formulation review.



To learn more about ESC's Seal of Acceptance products go to www.eczemahelp.ca

Ask the doctor

Back to school uniform itch!



Q: *My child's school uniform causes her to itch, how should we manage this?*

A: Great question! In kids with eczema, their skin is much more sensitive to triggers, such as rough clothing that rubs on the skin. The best way to deal with this is to minimize the external trigger. For example, it would be helpful to find fabric that is not as rough or abrasive to the skin, if there are options to choose from for the uniform fabric. Typically, cotton is less abrasive than wool or polyester. Another option would be to have a layer of protection between the uniform and the skin - either as a layer of clothing or with something like an ointment-based moisturizer. If the clothing has already set off a flare of eczema (with red, rough and itchy skin), it is worth treating this with moisturizers and/or topical medications.

Dr. Joseph Lam is an Associate Professor (clinical) at the BC Children's Hospital and an Associate Member of the Department of Dermatology and Skin Sciences at the University of British Columbia.

ESC in the news

***Global News story features treatment access issue
and the impact on eczema sufferers***

ESC was recently featured in a Global News story covering CADTH's negative recommendation for the new drug dupilumab and the impact it may have on Canadian eczema sufferers.

This media coverage is another step in raising awareness, and provided our organization the opportunity to share more about the true impact eczema can have on the lives of patients. It highlights the need for access to new treatments, especially for those who are in desperate need. To read the full article, click the link below:

Canada's drug agency advised against reimbursing a costly eczema drug - here's why people are worried

<https://globalnews.ca/news/4360291/no-coverage-for-eczema-drug-recommendation/>

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.

Connect

Find a support volunteer at
www.eczemahelp.ca

Hope

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

Maryam Sanati, Editor-in-chief,
Chatelaine Magazine

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Eczema Help

Contact us at 1-855-Eczema-1 or email us at
info@eczemahelp.ca

