



# The Burden of Eczema in Canada

2025 Survey Report  
Eczema Society of Canada



# We're Here to Help.

## About Eczema Society of Canada

Eczema Society of Canada (ESC) is a registered Canadian charity dedicated to improving the lives of Canadians living with eczema by providing education, support, awareness, advocacy, and research. For more information, visit [eczemahelp.ca](http://eczemahelp.ca).

# Acknowledgements

ESC sincerely thanks the patients and caregivers who shared their expertise and insights for this project, including patient consultants and volunteers. We also thank the Canadians living with eczema (atopic dermatitis) who took the survey. ESC extends sincere gratitude to medical students **Safin Aly** and **Maxine Chevrier-Joly**, as well as dermatologists **Dr. Jérôme Coulombe** and **Dr. Aaron Drucker**, for their contributions to the survey, publications, and reports.

# About Eczema (Atopic Dermatitis)

Eczema is a common chronic inflammatory skin condition characterized by areas of dry skin that are red and intensely itchy. There are many types of eczema; however, the most common is atopic dermatitis (AD). The terms “eczema” and “AD” are often used interchangeably, and for the purposes of this report, the term “eczema” will be used to describe AD.

Eczema may cause skin to ooze and become scaly, crusted, or hardened. It can occur anywhere on the skin and is commonly found on the flexors (bends of the arms and backs of the knees).

Eczema flares can be extremely itchy and painful, and can lead to psychological distress and negatively impact the individual and their family. These symptoms can range from mild to severe, and while people living with eczema can experience periods of remission, some never experience relief from these life-altering symptoms. Eczema affects each person differently and may require various treatments to manage the condition.

# About this Report

Living with eczema can be complicated and affect sufferers in many ways. Eczema can impact an individual's physical, mental, emotional, and financial well-being. This burden can feel immense, especially among those whose condition is not managed well.

ESC recently conducted a survey to better understand how eczema affects the lives of Canadians. The survey was conducted in 2025. This report presents data from 389 respondents from across Canada who self-identified as having a diagnosis of eczema from a health care provider. Respondents reported the severity of their eczema using the definitions outlined below.



# Definitions of Eczema Severity



## Mild

Areas of dry skin, mild and infrequent itching, without sleep disturbance, with or without small areas of rash and/or redness.



## Moderate

Areas of dry skin, frequent itching, with some sleep disturbance, rash and/or redness with or without broken skin or localized skin thickening.



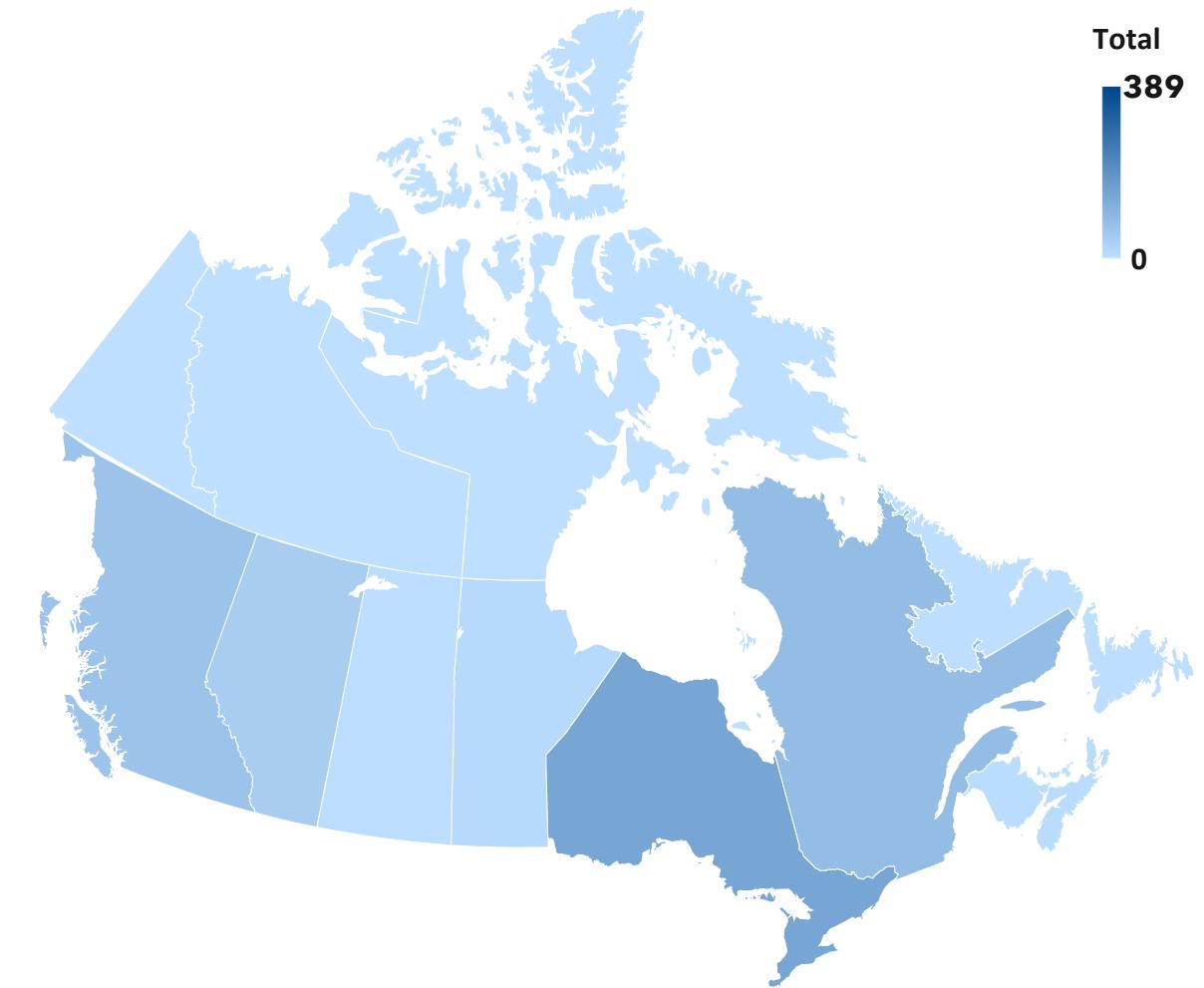
## Severe

Areas of dry skin, incessant itching, with significant sleep disturbance, rash and/or redness with or without broken skin, extensive skin thickening, bleeding, oozing, cracking and changes in skin colour.

Respondents were from all provinces

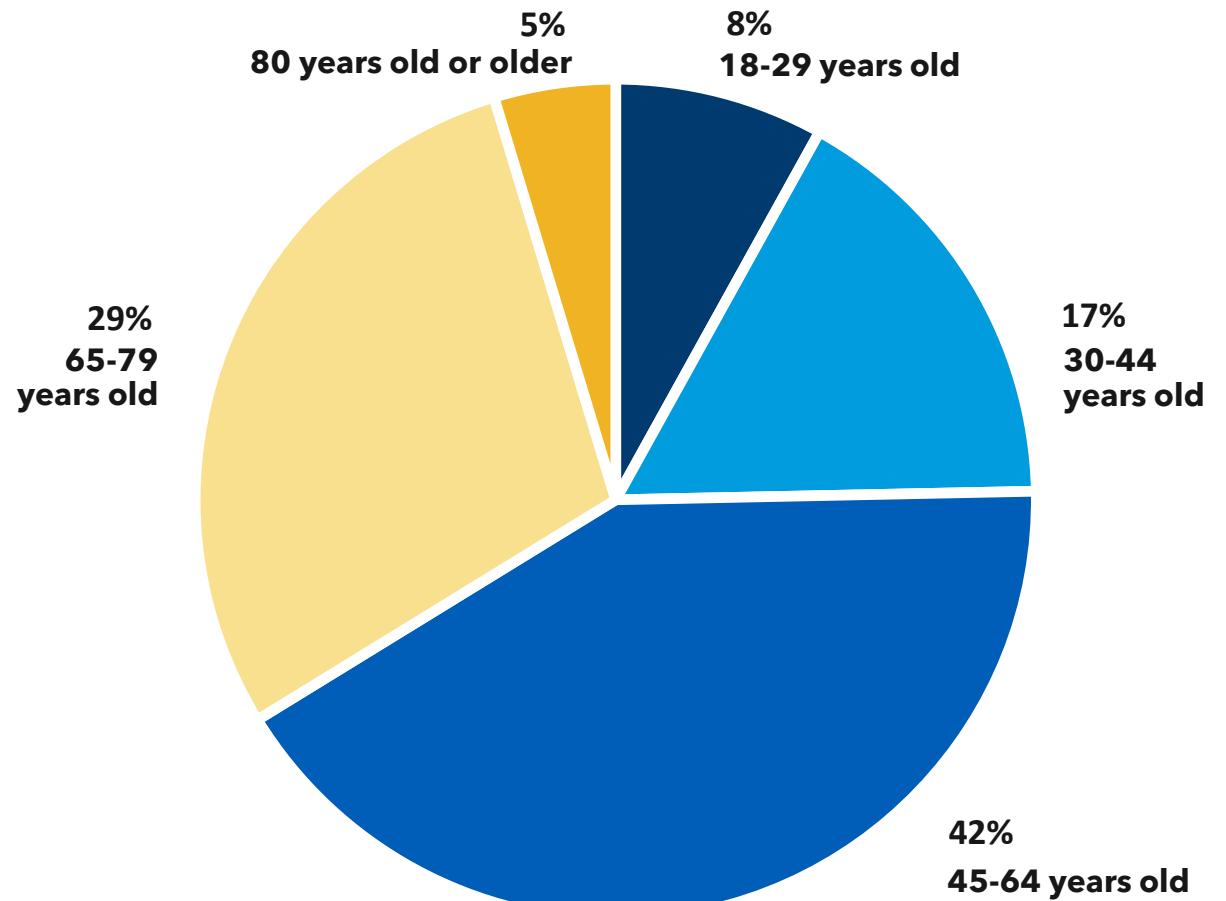
## Survey Response: Demographics

The 2025 ESC Eczema Access and Burden - Adult Survey included **389** respondents from across Canada, representing all provinces, with the largest number of responses coming from Ontario, Quebec, and British Columbia. The majority of respondents identified as female.



**Survey Response:**  
**Age of  
Respondents**

**Age distribution of respondents**



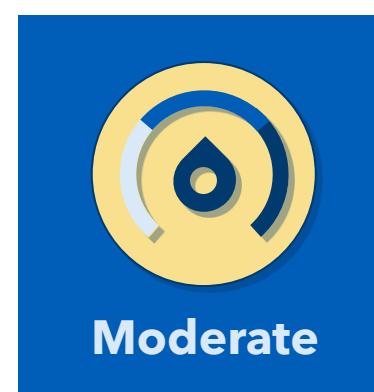
**Survey Response:**

# Eczema Severity Among Respondents



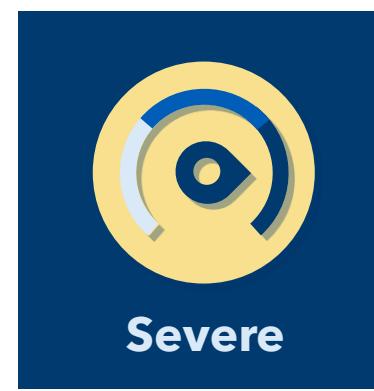
**22%**

of respondents  
identified as having  
mild eczema



**50%**

of respondents  
identified as having  
moderate eczema



**28%**

of respondents  
identified as having  
severe eczema

**Survey Response:**

# **Respondents Skin Colour Self-Identification**

Of the respondents with moderate to severe eczema, a higher proportion self-identified as having skin of colour or BIPOC – meaning Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour.

**Self-identified as white**

**77%**

**Self-identified as a person  
with skin of colour/BIPOC**

**18%**

**Prefer not to say**

**3%**

**Other (self describe)**

**2%**

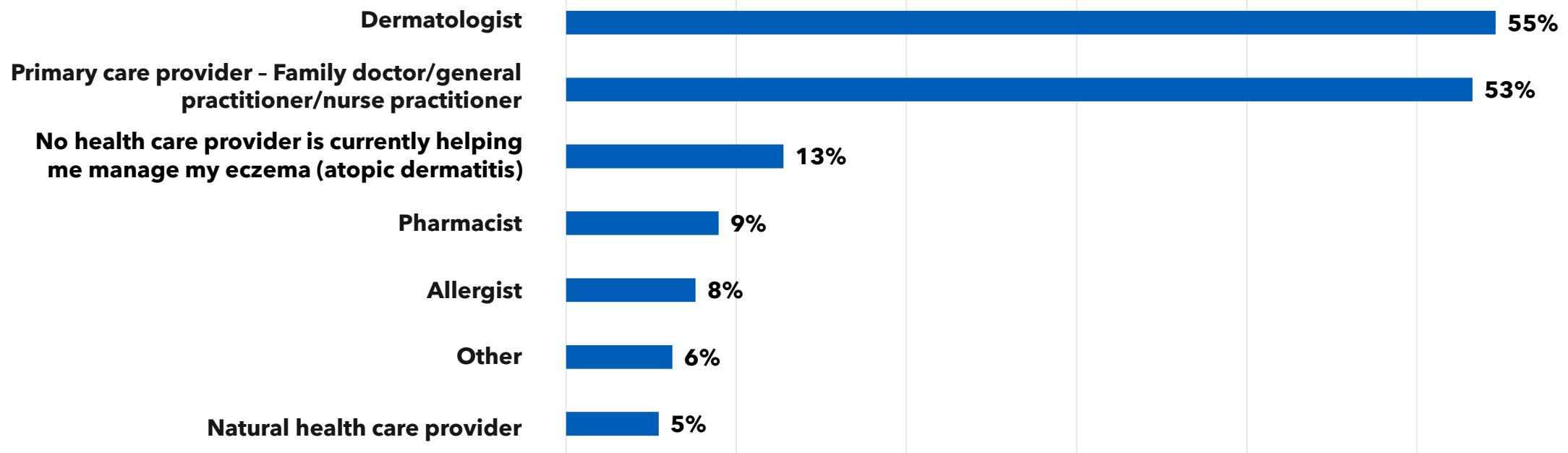


## Eczema Care Providers

Dermatologists are the most common health care providers treating respondents' eczema, followed by primary care providers (e.g., family doctors, general practitioners or nurse practitioners). The survey results indicate that the severity of eczema correlates with the likelihood of being treated by a dermatologist.

Few respondents reported being treated by a pharmacist or allergist, and **13%** of respondents indicated no health care provider is currently helping them manage their eczema.

### Types of health care providers managing eczema care (select all that apply)



# Eczema Management

Typically, eczema is managed through a combination of skin care, trigger avoidance, and medical treatments. However, trying different treatments and approaches is often necessary to find an option that effectively manages symptoms. In this report, ESC wanted to better understand how well eczema is being managed, and the reason why individuals have stopped a treatment in the past.



**4% of respondents with **mild eczema** report that their eczema is **not well managed** on their current treatment**

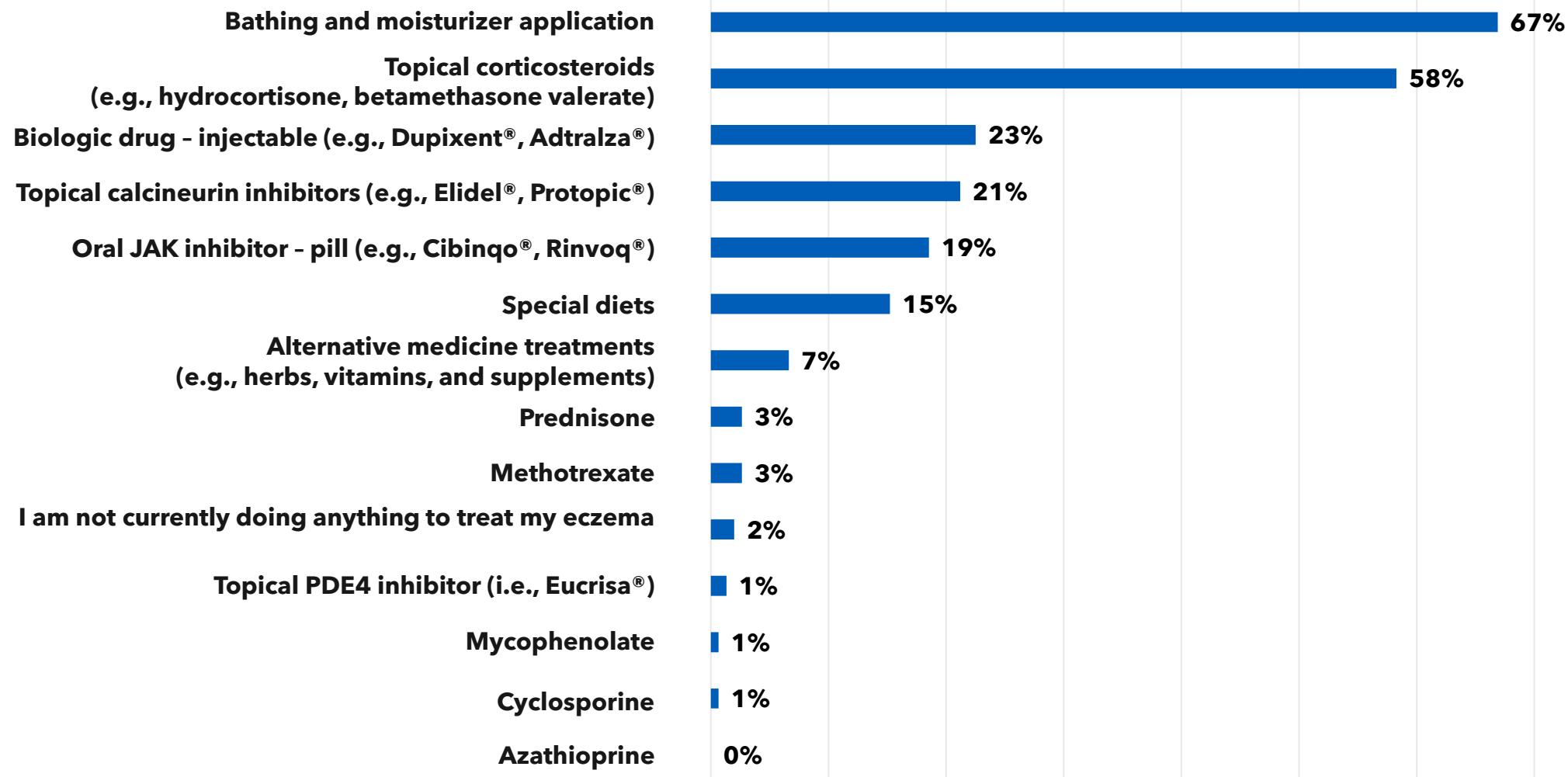


**15% of respondents with **moderate eczema** report that their eczema is **not well managed** on their current treatment**



**24% of respondents with **severe eczema** report that their eczema is **not well managed** on their current treatment**

**Treatments currently used by respondents who report their eczema is well or very well managed (select all that apply)**



# Quality of Life Impact of Eczema Management

The survey data confirmed that quality of life improves as eczema is better managed. Among respondents who reported their eczema as very well managed, **88%** indicated that their quality of life has significantly improved.



# Understanding Treatment Goals

When asked about their goals for an effective treatment, **89%** of total respondents identified itch reduction followed by **86%** who identified a reduction in rash and skin symptoms.

Respondents also identified improvements in the way skin looks, sleep, mood, and self-confidence as goals of their eczema treatment.

**The top two goals of eczema treatments are itch and skin symptom improvement.**





## Stopping Eczema Treatment

The most common reasons respondents stopped a treatment were because it didn't improve their eczema (**52%**), they were worried about side effects (**31%**), it caused their eczema to flare (**21%**), or it was painful or uncomfortable (**20%**).

# Patient Involvement in Treatment Discussions

Effective communication between patients and health care providers (HCP) is recognized as an important part of shared decision-making. The survey report findings indicate that respondents want to be included in treatment conversations and decision-making, including a better understanding of side effects and risks of treatments.



# Patient Involvement in Treatment Discussions

## Discussing Treatment Options

- **31%** of respondents reported that their HCP rarely or never asks for their input when discussing treatment options
- **80%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would like their HCP to ask for their input when discussing their eczema treatment plan

## Discussing Risks and Benefits

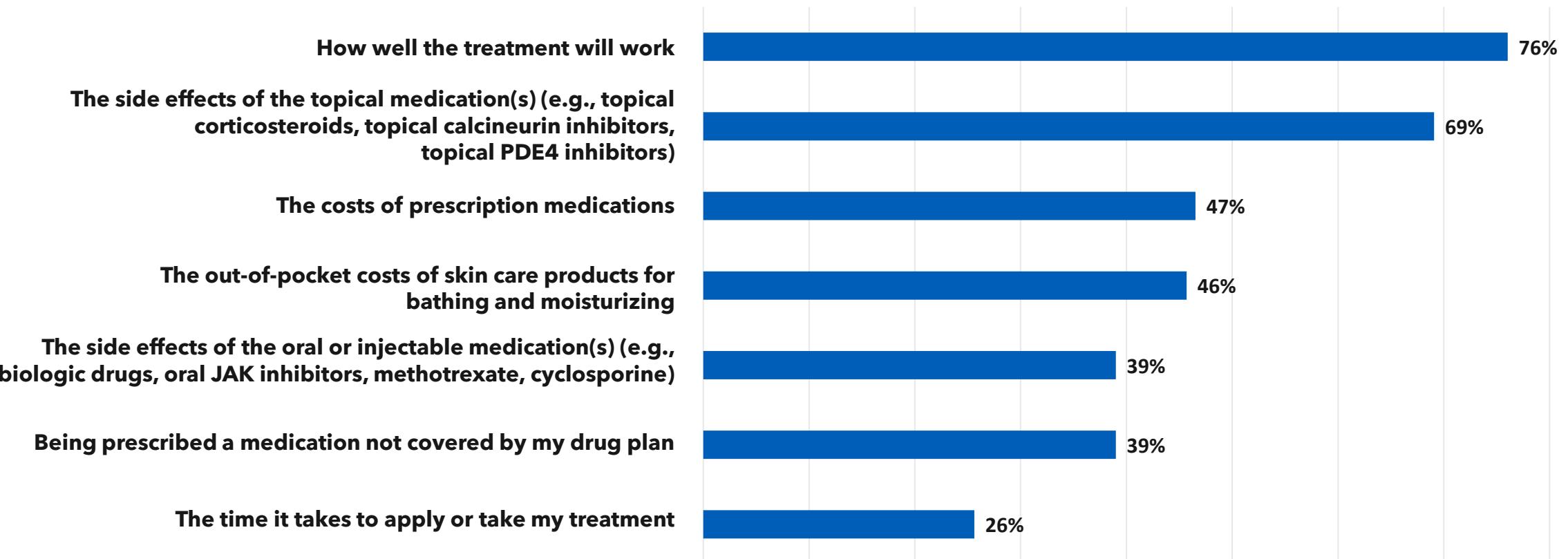
- **23%** of respondents reported that their HCP rarely or never discusses the risks and benefits when prescribing treatments
- **87%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would like their HCP to discuss risks and benefits when prescribing treatments



# Eczema Treatment Concerns

Survey respondents were asked to identify their worries regarding eczema treatments. The results showed that treatment effectiveness was the most common concern, with **76%** of respondents reporting they worry about how well the treatment will work. Concerns about the side effects of topical medications were second, followed by financial concerns about the cost of prescription medications and skin care.

### What respondents worry about when it comes to eczema treatments (select all that apply)

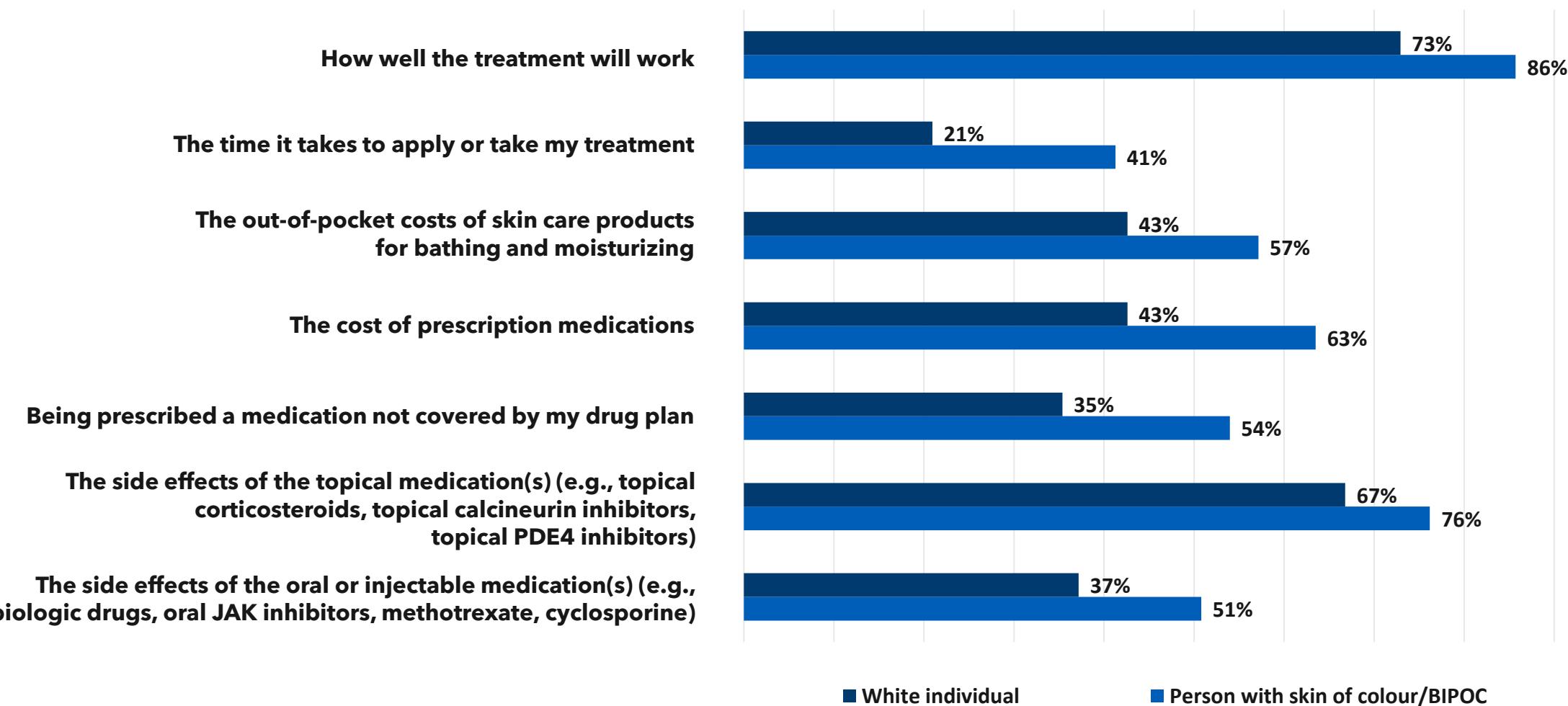




# Treatment Concerns Across Skin Colour Identity

When compared to respondents who identified as white, respondents who identified as persons with skin of colour/BIPOC reported more worry about treating their eczema.

**What respondents with skin of colour/BIPOC worry about when it comes to eczema treatments, compared to white individuals (select all that apply)**



# Access and Affordability

Managing eczema doesn't just take a toll physically and emotionally; it can be difficult to manage financially as well. According to the survey, **25%** of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that treating their eczema has caused them a financial burden. Further, as severity increases, so does the likelihood of experiencing financial impacts.



# Financial Burden of Eczema Treatment Across all Respondents

## **Respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that their eczema has caused financial burden:**

- **32%** for severe eczema respondents
- **23%** for moderate eczema respondents
- **19%** for mild eczema respondents

Skin colour identification impacts the data, with disparities across respondents who self-identified as white, and those who self-identified as persons with skin of colour/BIPOC.

## **Across respondents who identified as white:**

- **21%** agreed or strongly agreed that their eczema has caused financial burden

## **Across respondents who identified as persons with skin of colour/BIPOC:**

- **39%** agreed or strongly agreed that their eczema has caused financial burden

# Delay of Treatment

**13%** of all respondents reported that financial concerns delayed the start of a prescription treatment.

**26%** of severe respondents reported that financial concerns delayed the start of a prescription treatment.



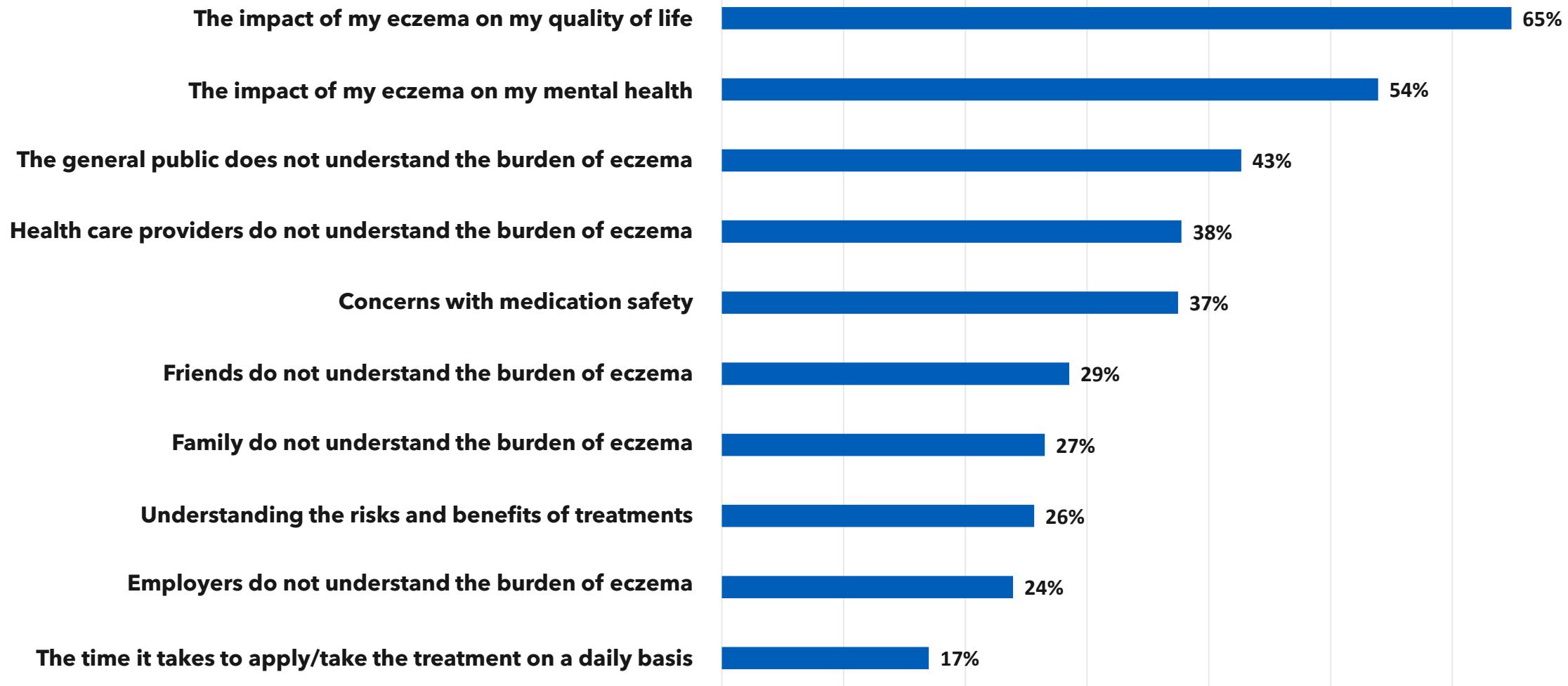


# Quality of Life Challenges in Eczema Management

Responses to this survey emphasized eczema's impact on daily life. The respondents described eczema as a condition that affects not only physical comfort but also emotional and social well-being.

The findings also show that respondents reported feeling misunderstood by health care providers, employers, and family and friends. The need for greater awareness and empathy in both clinical and everyday settings is a recurring theme across responses.

### Challenges related to quality of life and eczema management (select all that apply)



# Are health care providers asking about quality of life?

**44%** of respondents reported their HCP rarely or never asks about their quality of life when discussing their eczema treatment plan.

**83%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they want their HCP to ask about their quality of life when discussing their eczema treatment plan.

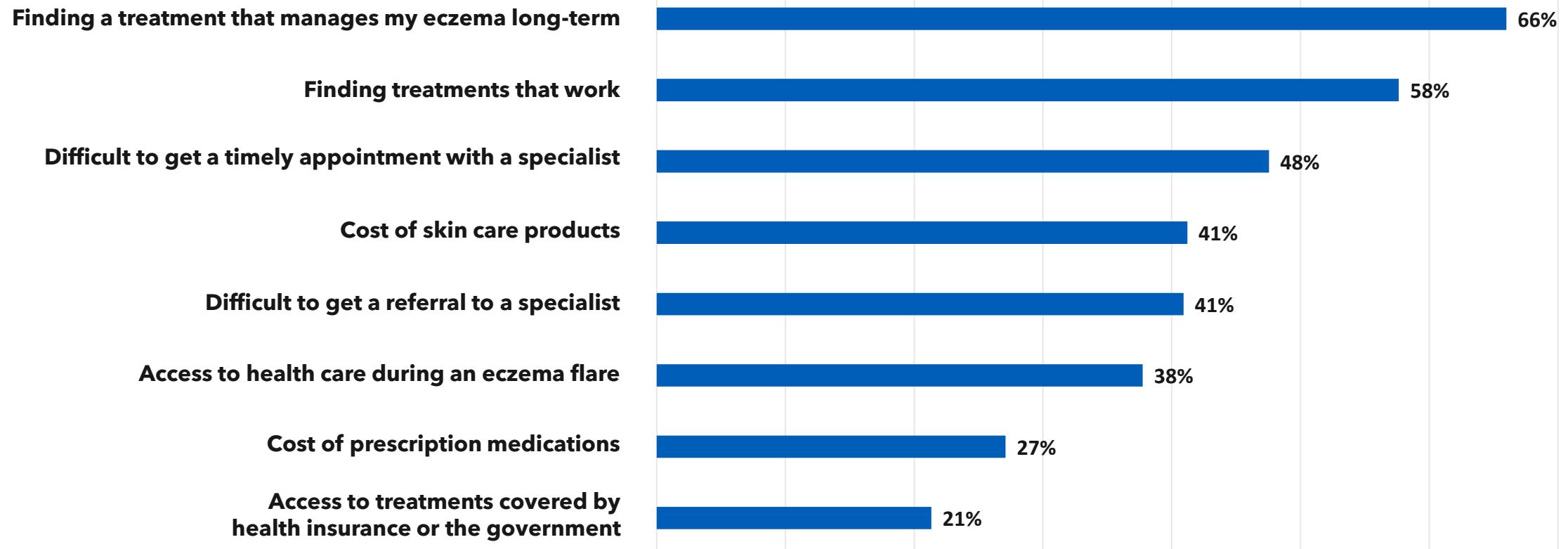




# Access to Care Challenges in Eczema Management

In terms of access to care, respondents reported challenges finding a treatment that works to manage their eczema long term. Additional barriers to care include the cost of skin care and prescription medications, and timely access to dermatologic and/or specialist care.

### Challenges related to access to care and eczema management (all that apply)



# Summary

## **In summary, respondents' experienced:**

- Challenges with health care provider access and interactions related to understanding risks and benefits of treatments, quality of life impacts, and treatment discussions
- Challenges with treatments and concerns around safety and financial burdens
- Challenges with access and affordability of treatments, with increased burdens shown for respondents who identified as persons with skin of colour/BIPOC
- Delays in treatment due to financial concerns
- Quality of life impacts due to their eczema, including mental health impacts, misunderstandings of the condition, concerns with medication safety, and feelings that health care providers don't understand the burden of eczema
- Challenges finding a long-term treatment to manage their eczema, finding treatments that work, and accessing a specialist

# We're Here to Help.



**[eczemahelp.ca](https://www.eczemahelp.ca)**

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