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# Eczema or Dermatitis



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In Ayurveda eczema is known as vicharchika, and categorised into three types, Vata, Pitta and Kapha dominant eczema types. Eczema is more common in Pitta types as Pitta can overheat the blood (*Rakta dhātu*) and predispose to toxic conditions which are expressed through the skin. Factors causing such skin problems include poor digestion (low agni), toxins in the bowel (ama), incorrect diet, over use of sour, salty, or pungent tastes, heavy, sweet or oily foods, as well as over-use of cosmetics, perfumes, synthetic creams, etc.

Eczema is a general term for several types of skin disorders, also known as dermatitis. The most common form is a topic dermatitis, which affects people of all age groups and is often due to an allergic reaction. Its sufferers may also have a predisposition to various allergies, hay fever, and asthma.

Infantile eczema occurs in babies under 3 years old, but usually clears up within few years and should never be suppressed with steroidal creams. Some people notice that exposure to the sun, humidity, or ocean water help tremendously, while others not. Areas affected in adults are mainly the face, elbows, hands, knees and ankles. In infants it mainly manifests on the face, neck, scalp forearms, and legs. Of course, simply labelling the condition doesn't help much in the long run if the underlining causes are not identified and addressed.

In conventional medicine the root cause of eczema is not clearly understood, but abnormal immune function and hereditary factors are thought to play a major role. Aggravating factors include seasonal changes, certain foods, environmental allergens, pet dander, soaps, detergents, some fabrics, hot water, and bodily sweat. Certain high

allergy foods such as wheat, gluten, soy, corn, and dairy are believed be causes, but efforts to omit lots of items from the daily diet can be frustrating and almost impossible and may not make any difference in the long run. In any case, it is best to start with the basic guidelines offered here along with a well-rounded individualized Ayurvedic program, and over time take further measures with dietary restrictions if needed. In Ayurveda, psoriasis is a similar condition to eczema in that it has much of the same root causes, so herbal treatment



and dietary and lifestyle recommendations are also similar.

## Cleansing and Rejuvenation (Panchakarma Treatments) for Eczema

One of the most important aspects of eczema treatment includes seasonal detoxification with Panchakarma. This allows for the removal of deep-seated toxins and metabolic wastes, and also helps to weaken the tendencies for bad habits that stand in the way of the healing process. This type of cleansing process is tailored to your individual needs to help remove excess dosha and toxins, calm your mind and nervous system,





and uproot the underlying causes of this condition. Gentle home cleansing may also provide relief if a full Panchakarma program cannot be done, but only under the guidance of an experienced Ayurvedic Doctor.

**Vata type eczema:** follow a vata reducing diet and lifestyle with sesame oil massage and castor oil laxative or enemas. Pungent, bitter and astringent tasting foods should be reduced, while sweet, sour and salty tastes are recommended.

Medicated ghee can be used internally and externally. Useful herbs for medicating the ghee include Triphala, Musta (*Cyperus rotundus*), Manjishta, Gokshura, Chitrak, Neem, Guduchi, Cardamom,

Punarnava, and Vacha (*Acorus calamus*) root.

**Pitta type eczema:** Follow an anti-Pitta diet, avoiding possible allergens such as dairy produce, vegetables from the nightshade family, as well as oranges, peaches and strawberries. Sour, salty and hot spicy foods are best avoided, while sweet, bitter and astringent foods are recommended. Drinking coconut juice is helpful, along with coriander leaf juice. Exposure to sun and heat is best avoided.

Ghee is considered excellent for external use in skin problems such as rashes and burns. Aloe Vera gel is another beneficial application for most skin problems and can be mixed with a pinch of turmeric powder, as

is the juice of coriander leaves. Neem oil can be very effective.

**Kapha type eczema:** A Kapha reducing diet and lifestyle is recommended by avoiding all heavy, greasy and oily food, particularly cheese and yogurt. Sweet, sour and salty tasting foods should be reduced, while pungent, bitter and astringent foods are recommended.

In India and Sri Lanka emetic therapy is used as the initial treatment. Useful herbs for internal use include Gokshura, Guggulu, Triphala, Manjishta, Ginger, Chitrak, Guduchi, Cardamom, Kushta, (*Saussurea lappa*) and Gotu kola. Diuretic herbs such as Dandelion leaf and Punarnava are useful. Triphala guggul capsules can be given before bed. A formula called Gokshura guggul is also used with warm water or ginger tea.

Traditional ayurvedic warm oil massage, herbal steam bath, and shirodhara are very beneficial in most eczema cases and can be performed as often as desired to promote lymphatic drainage and to promote circulation, gently cleanse the system, calm the body and mind, and overcome fear and insecurity around the issue. Whilst administering tailored ayurvedic herbal preparations and treatments, a complete cure for eczema is guaranteed in ayurvedic approach.

**Please provide any questions to the below e-mail for clarification and guidance.**

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