

SUNSHINE SHARING

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Product Summary

The following is a summary of major products discussed in this issue that may be of benefit in eczema and psoriasis.

Herbs applied topically to reduce itching.

- Chickweed
- Oregon Grape
- Burdock

Herbs and products to reduce inflammation (topical or internally).

- Licorice Root
- Yucca
- Chamomile
- Feverfew
- Nature's Fresh
- Aloe Vera

Essential fatty acids (taken internally to keep skin moist).

- Flax Seed Oil
- Evening Primrose Oil
- Omega 3 EPA
- Super GLA

Alteratives taken internally to cleanse toxins from the body.

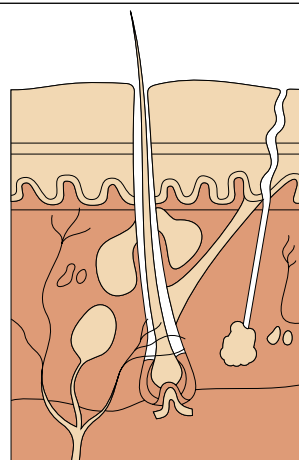
- Burdock
- Red Clover
- Lymphatic Drainage Formula
- Oregon Grape
- Milk Thistle Combo
- All Cell Detox
- Sarsaparilla

Other useful products.

- Vitamin B6
- HSN-W
- Colloidal Minerals
- Proactazyme
- Protease Plus
- Paw Paw Shampoo
- Thyroid Activator
- Thyroid Support
- Nature's Three

Natural Helps for Eczema and Psoriasis

The largest organ in the body is the skin. It weighs anywhere from six to nine pounds and would cover twenty square feet if stretched out. It also grows faster than any other organ. This flexible protective covering for the body also serves as our largest organ of elimination.



Problems with the skin generally reveal chronic problems with other internal organs such as the colon, liver and kidneys, or imbalances in the glandular function. There are many types of skin disorders. This issue of *Sunshine Sharing* will focus on two of the most common—and often difficult to treat—eczema and psoriasis.

While not life-threatening, both eczema and psoriasis greatly affect a person's appearance, self-esteem and quality of life. They cause pain and discomfort. Medically, there is no cure for either problem, although treatments are available that reduce symptoms. Our goal in this issue of *Sunshine Sharing* is to try to understand what causes these problems and what can be done to clear them up naturally. So, first, let's learn a little bit about the nature of these two conditions.

Eczema

Eczema is a very common skin condition, one that affects people of all ages. The word eczema comes from the Greek and literally means "boiling over." This disease is actually a chronic inflammation of the skin. Acute inflammation of the skin is known as dermatitis, and usually occurs when the body comes in contact with an irritating substance (such as poison ivy). The substance irritates the skin, and the tissues react via the inflammatory process.

All inflammatory diseases (which end in the Latin "itis" as in arthritis, tonsillitis, etc.) happen in the same manner. Toxic substances damage cells which release histamine and bradykinin into surrounding fluids. This causes capillary pores to dilate allowing fluid and protein to enter the tissue spaces. Tissues become red, swollen, hot and painful. In both eczema and dermatitis, the skin becomes irritated, resulting in red and itchy skin.

In eczema, the skin is repeatedly irritated and inflamed which causes the upper layer of the skin (epidermis) to thicken as skin cells multiply rapidly. This creates a scaly effect on the surface of the skin. Oil glands become obstructed,

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Eczema and Psoriasis

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and the skin becomes dry. The scaly skin inhibits elimination through the skin, causing toxins to become trapped under the skin. This causes itching, which leads the person to scratch. Scratching breaks the upper dermis layer so the skin develops a broken and cracked appearance.

Eczema is caused by the body being hypersensitive to certain irritants, so it is closely related to allergic asthma, hayfever, and food allergies. In all of these conditions, irritants are creating inflammation on surface tissues of the intestinal tract, respiratory tract or skin. Modern medicine considers these conditions to be a result of a hyperactive immune system, but we disagree with this viewpoint. These conditions are actually caused by a healthy immune system that is overburdened with toxins. Simply put, the body is being overwhelmed by more toxins than it can effectively handle.

This may explain why children are extremely prone to eczema. Almost

thirty percent of all newborn babies may develop this condition, which affects about one in eight young children. It often occurs on the scalp or the cheeks, but can spread over other parts of the body, making children itchy and miserable. Although 75% will "outgrow" this condition by their mid-teens, we wonder if this isn't occurring just because their immune system's become too depressed to manifest it. Adults who had eczema as children will remain prone to dry skin in later years and to occasional flare-ups of skin inflammation.

In traditional herbal medicine, the solution has not been to suppress the immune response, but to reduce exposure to irritating substances and improve the body's eliminative and detoxification functions. This works on the root causes of eczema. In this issue, we'll cover products and natural therapies that help to achieve these results.

Psoriasis

Psoriasis differs from eczema because it involves rapid skin growth and

appears to be an autoimmune disorder, like multiple sclerosis or lupus. Just like all "itises" (arthritis, tonsillitis, etc.) are the same inflammatory process taking place in different tissues, so all autoimmune disorders are the same basic process affecting different parts of the body. In each type of autoimmune disorder, the immune system is confused and is mistaking some of the body's own tissues as "invaders." This triggers a hyperactive immune reaction that causes damage to the affected tissues.

Psoriasis is an autoimmune reaction that primarily affects the skin, but in about 10% of the cases the joints are also affected. Research suggests that psoriasis is triggered when certain T-cells reproduce very rapidly, which starts an inflammatory reaction that causes skin cells to multiply seven to twelve times faster than normal.

Because this hyperactivity of the immune system also creates a form of inflammation, psoriasis has symptoms similar to eczema. The skin is often itchy and dry, and frequently cracking or blistering. There are many forms of psoriasis. The most common, plaque psoriasis, is characterized by inflamed lesions that may be covered with white or silver scales. Other forms of the disease include guttate psoriasis, inverse psoriasis, erythrodermic psoriasis, pustular psoriasis and nail psoriasis.

The disease affects about 5-6 million people in the United States and about 80 million people worldwide. There appears to be a genetic factor in psoriasis, as 30-50 percent of the people who have it have relatives with the disease. It appears that environmental factors like damage to the skin, infections, stress, medications, dietary factors, climate, and alcohol and smoking can trigger flare-ups of psoriasis.

Again, the solution in alternative medicine is not to directly suppress the immune response, but to balance the nutrition and biochemistry of the body. Many of the same products that alleviate eczema will also help the body heal psoriasis, but there are some important differences.

Skin pH and the Acid Mantle

Our skin has an acid mantle with a pH between 4.2 and 5.6, with variations from one part of the body to the other. This mantle is formed from a combination of oil (sebum) secreted by oil glands and perspiration, secreted by sweat glands. These secretions form a barrier that protects the skin and renders it less vulnerable to damage by environmental factors like sun and wind. It also inhibits the growth of microorganisms like bacteria and fungus. This layer also helps keep the skin moist.

When this acid mantle is removed and the pH of the skin becomes more alkaline, the skin is more easily damaged and irritated. Acne, eczema and other problems may develop as a result.

The soaps most people are using are highly alkaline and remove the acid mantle and protective lipids, which dries the skin and actually increases risk of skin infections and diseases. Sunshine Concentrate is a natural soap that helps maintain the proper pH and acid mantle on the skin. Bathing in **Sunshine Concentrate** and using it as your laundry soap can lessen skin irritation and reduce symptoms.

It is also wise to limit your contact with things that irritate the skin. These may include household cleansers, detergents, aftershave lotions, soap, gasoline, turpentine and other solvents. Wear protective gloves when working with irritants.

Eczema can flare up when you are under stress. Learn how to recognize and cope with stress. Stress reduction techniques can help. Changing your activities to reduce daily stress can also be helpful.

Natural Help for Eczema

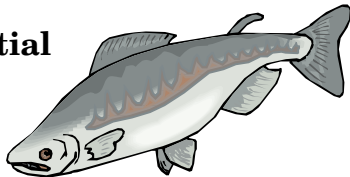
Problems with eczema aren't just skin deep. The skin can only become irritated and inflamed when toxins are present. In order for those toxins to be present, they must be in the blood, which means we must look deeper to discover the source of the irritation and the internal organs and glands that are not functioning optimally.

Diet

Skin problems typically begin in the digestive tract and liver, where toxic substances are absorbed into the blood stream, so natural care for eczema starts with avoiding irritants in the diet. Chemicals, food additives, pesticide residues and the like should be removed from the diet as much as possible. Foods that trigger allergic reactions or produce excessive waste acid should also be avoided.

A good place to start is to avoid foods that are incompatible with your blood type. Some of the common allergenic foods that may contribute to skin irritation include wheat, dairy, corn, orange juice, coffee, black tea, soda pop and sugar.

Essential Fatty Acids



Oils

help to keep the skin moist and protected (see sidebar on skin pH). People with eczema are frequently deficient in essential fatty acids and fat soluble vitamins. Good fats (particularly the omega 3 oils) can help reduce inflammation, while hydrogenated fats can increase inflammation. Therefore, margarine, shortening and fried foods should be avoided.

Use olive oil for cooking and salad dressings, and supplement the diet with appropriate essential fatty acids. **Omega 3-EPA** and Vitamin A (found in **Vitamin A&D**) are very beneficial. Other good choices include **Super GLA**, **Evening Primrose Oil**, and **Flax Seed Oil**.

Fat Metabolism

These healthy fats won't do the

body any good if they aren't being digested and metabolized properly. People with eczema often have problems with organs that process fats in the body, such as the liver. Lipase enzymes (such as those found in **Hi-Lipase** and **Proactyzyme**) will help the body break down fats in the digestive tract.

Burdock root helps the liver process fats and deliver them to the skin, which is why it often proves very helpful in eczema. Another herb that helps the body break up and metabolize fats is chickweed. Toxins can get trapped in the fatty layer under the skin, causing itching. **Chickweed** helps break up fat deposits, and is helpful for itching when taken internally. When used topically (in the form of fomentations, baths or poultices) it reduces itching and irritation.

The thyroid gland is also important in metabolizing fats and maintaining skin health. So, if the thyroid is low, supplements like **TS II**, **Thyroid Activator** or **Thyroid Support** should be added to the person's program.

Reducing Inflammation

Eczema is often treated medically with corticosteroid drugs which mimic the anti-inflammatory action of the adrenal hormone cortisol. People with eczema often suffer from adrenal exhaustion (with a corresponding deficiency in the production of cortisol). This helps explain why the excessive inflammation is present and why eczema can flare up under stress. Stress depletes the adrenals.

So, along with learning good stress management techniques, herbs that support adrenal function and have a cortisol-like action may be helpful. Both **licorice** root and **yucca** have this effect. Licorice, however, should be avoided with weeping eczema. Other adrenal enhancing remedies such as **Adrenal Support** and **ENRG-V** may also be of benefit.

Nature's Fresh contains enzymes that help tissue healing and reduce inflammation. It can be sprayed on topically.

Other Supplements

B vitamins support liver detoxification and help reduce nervous stress, so several of them may be helpful in eczema. Specifically, **Vitamin B6** along with burdock root has been beneficial for some. Vitamin B2 may also be helpful.

Trace minerals like zinc, copper, and silica are important to skin health and may be lacking in the diets of people with eczema. **HSN-W**, **Colloidal Minerals** or **SKL** may be helpful in replenishing these mineral reserves.

Fats are Important!

Our skin contains millions of tiny glands that secrete a thin layer of oil onto our skin to protect it and keep it soft and moist. There is also a thin layer of fat under the skin that helps keep the skin soft. Thus, high quality fats and oils are absolutely essential to skin function.

You would think that with our modern high fat diets that no one would be deficient in fats, but many people are. They are getting plenty of fats, but they are the wrong kind of fats. Vegetable oils are high in omega-6 fatty acids. When they are hydrogenated they produce trans-fatty acids. A diet high in omega-6 oils and trans fatty acids increases inflammatory responses in the body and thus aggravates problems like eczema and psoriasis. A high carbohydrate diet, which creates high insulin levels, further exacerbates this problem.

What is needed is more omega-3 fatty acids. These are primarily found in wild game and deep ocean fish. Almost everyone in our society is deficient in omega-3 fatty acids, so supplementation with **Omega-3 EPA** is very important. Reducing carbohydrates and trans fatty acids (hydrogenated fats and oils) will reduce the tendency to inflammation in all organs of the body, not just the skin, resulting in an overall improvement in health.

Helps for Psoriasis

Many of the products that help eczema will also help psoriasis. The major difference is that psoriasis is an autoimmune reaction that involves an excessive proliferation of skin cells. Remedies are needed that balance immune function rather than stimulate it.

As with eczema, essential fatty acids are very important in the treatment of psoriasis. In particular, the omega-3 essential fatty acids in **Omega-3 EPA** may be helpful. **Flax Seed Oil** and **Super GLA** may be helpful, but it is the Omega-3 oils in particular that help to reduce tissue irritation. A reduction in animal fats in the diet may also be helpful.

Diet is important in the effective treatment of psoriasis. Fasting and vegetarian diets have been shown to reduce symptoms. Eliminating gluten-bearing grains like wheat has also benefited some sufferers. Again, it would be a good idea to consider foods compatible with one's blood type, as food allergies are a contributing factor to psoriasis.

Incomplete protein digestion and bowel toxemia may be underlying factors in psoriasis. **Proactyzyne** or **Protease Plus**, taken between meals, will help break down undigested protein and detoxify the colon.

Detoxifying the liver is also important. Two good products for doing this are **Milk Thistle Combo** and **All Cell Detox**. Combined with a source of dietary fiber such as **Nature's Three** or **Psyllium Hulls Combo**, these formulas will also help to gently cleanse the bowel to get rid of the gut-derived toxins that may be involved in this disease.

The acetogenins in **Paw Paw Lice Remover Shampoo** inhibit the production of ATP and slow cellular growth. Washing the afflicted areas with the shampoo and then applying a very thin film of the shampoo and leaving it on for an hour (or overnight) may also be helpful for psoriasis.

Nutrients that have been reported helpful for psoriasis include Vitamin A (in large doses of about 50,000 to 75,000 IU per day), Vitamin E (400 to 800 IU per day), B-Complex and B6 in particular, Vitamin C, zinc, selenium, chromium, and sulfur. Other products reported to be helpful with psoriasis include **sarsaparilla**, **licorice root**, **chamomile** and **aloe vera**. **Feverfew** can be used both internally and topically to ease psoriasis. Finally, the polyphenols in **green tea** can also help to reduce irritation of the skin and ease psoriasis.

Sources

For more information about natural therapies and supplements for eczema and psoriasis, talk to the person who gave you this newsletter. His or her name should appear below. You can also consult some of the sources listed below for additional information.

Textbook of Natural Medicine by Joseph E. Pizzorno and Michael T. Murray

Quick Access: Professional Guide to Conditions, Herbs and Supplements

Encyclopedia of Natural Healing by Siegfried Gursche, MH

www.casday.com/skincourse.htm

The Book of Herbal Wisdom by Matthew Wood

Consumer's Guide to Nature's Sunshine Herbal Products by Tree of Light Publishing

Important Notice

The information in *Sunshine Sharing* is for educational purposes only and should not be used to diagnose and treat diseases. If you have a health problem we recommend you consult a competent health practitioner before embarking on any course of treatment.

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