



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

A skin condition with greasy, or dry, white scales. Dandruff and cradle cap are both forms of seborrheic dermatitis. It can involve the skin of the scalp, eyebrows, forehead, face, folds around the nose, behind ears and external ear canal, or skin of the trunk, especially over the breastbone (sternum), or in skin folds. It can not be spread from person to person.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Flaking, white scales over reddish patches on the skin. Scales stick to hair shafts. They may itch, but they are usually painless unless complicated by infection.

CAUSES

Unknown. Causes may be different in infants and adults.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Hot, humid weather, or cold, dry weather.
- Oily skin.
- Other skin disorders, such as acne rosacea, acne, or psoriasis.
- Family history of seborrheic dermatitis.
- Obesity.
- Parkinson's disease, stroke, or head injury.
- Use of drying lotions that contain alcohol.
- People with immune disorders.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Cannot be prevented. To reduce severity or frequency of flare-ups:
 - Shampoo often.
 - Dry skin completely after bathing or showering.
 - Wear loose, ventilating clothing.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

This is a chronic condition, but it often can come and go. When it does occur, symptoms can be controlled with treatment. It does not cause hair loss.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Embarrassment and social discomfort.
- Bacterial skin infection in affected areas.



DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- See your health care provider if self-help steps are not working. A skin exam is usually all that is needed for diagnosis.
- Shampoo once a day. Loosen scales with your fingernails while shampooing. Leave the shampoo on for about 5 minutes and then rinse off.
- For infants, use mild baby shampoo to wash the hair and rinse completely. Brush the hair gently with a soft brush after shampooing and other times during the day.

MEDICATIONS

- For minor dandruff, you may use nonprescription dandruff shampoos. They may contain different types of ingredients, and all are effective.
- For seborrheic skin infections in teens and adults, a nonprescription steroid lotion may be used.
- For more severe problems, shampoos that contain coal tar, or scalp creams that contain cortisone may be prescribed. Follow instructions that are provided with each product on how to apply to hair or skin.

ACTIVITY

No limits.

DIET

No special diet.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of seborrheic dermatitis that don't respond to self-care.
- Patches of seborrheic dermatitis ooze, form crusts, or drain pus.

Special notes:

More notes on the back of this page