

# Seborrheic Dermatitis

Seborrheic Dermatitis (or seborrheic eczema) is a non-contagious common condition that causes patches of dry, scaly and inflamed skin. It is most likely to develop on the scalp, neck, on the face (particularly around the eyebrows and beard), around the ears (and inside the ear canal), and within folds of skin such as armpits and in the groin area. In babies, Seborrheic Dermatitis is often called cradle cap. Symptoms are very similar to psoriasis, and some patients suffer with both conditions – called sebopsoriasis.

The condition is thought to occur in between **1-5%** of the population, and it affects men more than women, and is most prevalent in childhood and in the over 50's. Symptoms include **flaky, dry skin**, a build up of **greasy skin scales**, **soreness** and **itching**. Severe Seborrheic Dermatitis may cause temporary hair loss, but normal growth should return once the condition subsides.

The exact cause of seborrheic Dermatitis is unknown, although there is thought to be a link to Malassezia. This is a fungus that lives on the skin of humans and many animals, but it is thought that the immune systems of those with Seborrheic Dermatitis are more sensitive to it so reacts and results in inflammation.

**Tiredness, stress** or **general illness** may exacerbate your symptoms, and you are more likely to suffer Seborrheic Dermatitis if you have an underlying condition that affects the nerves, such as Parkinson's Disease or stroke.



# Treatments

Over-the-counter and GP prescribed medications include steroid and hydrocortisone creams, oral antifungal treatments and ultra violet light therapy.

If you experience seborrheic dermatitis on the scalp, you may be used to using coal tar based shampoos, or shampoos containing zinc or salicylic acid. These treatments can be unpleasant to use and, in the case of steroids, can thin and discolour the skin with long-term use, so you may like to find natural alternatives.



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