

## SEBORRHEIC DERMATITIS

Seborrheic dermatitis is a very common skin condition characterized by persistent dry, flaky, slightly inflamed skin characteristically around the eyebrows, side of the nose, ears, scalp and other hairy areas such as the sternum, mustache and beard. This skin condition is chronic and of unknown cause. While there is no cure, it is easily managed with simple, usually over-the-counter remedies. More severe cases may require a prescription treatment.

Treatments for seborrheic dermatitis include over the counter shampoos containing zinc, ketoconazole, selenium, tar and salicylic acid. Various prescription and over the counter topical corticosteroid preparations are also available for the treatment of seborrheic dermatitis. Finally, there are prescription products such as topical Ketoconazole and Elidel cream. Elidel cream is an especially expensive product retailing for between \$500 to \$700 per tube. In my opinion, the appropriate use of a mild topical corticosteroid product is the simplest, most effective and least expensive treatment option.

For mild to moderate seborrheic dermatitis of the scalp, I recommend the following:

1. Apply a small amount of Scalpicin maximum strength (contains 1% hydrocortisone in a clear liquid) to the affected areas of the scalp daily after showering for one week.
2. This product is applied after showering because it is intended to be left on all day.
3. After one week, maintenance is usually required with 1 to 2 times weekly applications to prevent recurrences.
4. Over-the-counter 1% ketoconazole shampoo as needed can be used to reduce reliance on hydrocortisone. In my experience, benefit of anti-dandruff shampoos is mild at best.

For the treatment of seborrheic dermatitis involving the face and ears, I recommend the following:

1. 1% hydrocortisone cream applied to affected areas on the face daily for one week, then 1 to 2 times weekly if needed to control flaking.
2. Refer to my pamphlet on basic skincare regarding cleansers and moisturizers.
3. I find that 1% hydrocortisone ointment is superior to 1% hydrocortisone cream for treatment of flaking and itching of the external ear canal and the area behind that ears.

For a discussion of the proper use of topical corticosteroids please refer to my pamphlet addressing this issue.

Written by Seth J. Cohen, M.D.  
[www.hendersonvilledermatology.com](http://www.hendersonvilledermatology.com)