

NEURODERMATITIS

Neurodermatitis is a form of eczema in the skin. It produces red, inflamed, scaling and itching areas. The first part of the word, *neuro*, refers to the fact that the problem is often related to stress and/or nerves. The second part of the word, *dermatitis*, refers to the way the skin looks in terms of the redness and scaling. Eczema is another word that is used in place of dermatitis; therefore neurodermatitis is a form of eczema.

The exact cause of neurodermatitis is unknown. In many cases, the problem, which caused the original skin condition, has long since gone away. The original condition, however, set up a pattern where the skin was itched and scratched. This caused more itching and more scratching. Eventually this creates an itch-scratch cycle, which allows the condition to persist. This is despite the fact that the original problem is gone. In many cases, nerves and stress contribute to this itch/scratch cycle.

Patches of neurodermatitis can be seen in any area of the body. Some of the more common areas are the neck, private area, and around the ankles. Some patients only have one spot in the skin. Some patients have spots all over the place.

Neurodermatitis is not a sign of an internal problem. It is not a sign of cancer or any contagious skin problem.

Fortunately, neurodermatitis can be controlled in most cases. There is no true cure for the problem but the medication I prescribe often helps significantly. Treatments include various creams, which are applied to the skin, pills, which control the itching, and injections into the affected areas. I will determine what is the best treatment for your individual case.

Neurodermatitis can be a frustrating condition but in most cases therapy is available which helps significantly in treating it. If you have any other questions regarding this problem, please ask me before you leave the office.