



DOCTOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

Managing Seborrheic Dermatitis

Seborrheic dermatitis is a common skin condition that causes symptoms including scaly patches, red skin, and persistent dandruff. It most commonly affects the scalp but can occur on many other parts of the body such as the face, nose, eyebrows, and chest. The first step to getting treatment for seborrheic dermatitis is to understand the condition and to talk to your doctor. Familiarize yourself with these common terms before your appointment to help facilitate your discussion.

Vocabulary to Know

Your doctor might mention these common terms. Here's what they mean.

<i>Malassezia</i>	Seborrheic dermatitis is thought to be caused by a local inflammatory response to colonization by <i>Malassezia</i> fungus in sebum-producing skin areas.
Sebaceous Glands	Sebaceous glands are microscopic glands in the skin that secrete a lubricating oil called sebum. Sebaceous glands are found on the face and scalp in the greatest number. They are also found in other body areas covered with hair. Seborrheic dermatitis tends to occur in skin areas with sebaceous glands.
Cradle Cap	In infants, seborrheic dermatitis appears on the scalp and is called cradle cap. Seborrheic dermatitis can also appear on an infant's face and in the diaper area. It usually goes away between 6 to 12 months of age.
Anti-fungal	These medications are available as gels, creams, and shampoos. Some are available without a prescription, but if symptoms are severe, your doctor may prescribe a prescription-strength anti-fungal.
Anti-inflammatory	Topical corticosteroids have been used short-term to treat seborrheic dermatitis. Anti-inflammatories are usually more effective than anti-fungals. Prednisone is a pill form corticosteroid used to treat seborrheic dermatitis for short periods. It is only used in severe cases due to its harsh side effects.
Ketoconazole	Ketoconazole is used to treat fungal infections in the body. Treatment with topical ketoconazole is a mainstay therapy of seborrheic dermatitis of the body and face. It is only used for short durations because it is known for causing harsh side effects. Some over-the-counter shampoos for treating seborrheic dermatitis of the scalp contain ketoconazole in small amounts.
Coal tar	Coal tar belongs to a class of drugs known as keratoplastics. It is used to treat itching, scaling, and flaking from seborrheic dermatitis.
Selenium sulfide	A topical anti-fungal medication that prevents fungus from growing on the skin. Topical selenium sulfide treats dandruff and seborrheic dermatitis.
Phototherapy	Phototherapy, also called light therapy, treats seborrheic dermatitis with a special kind of light. It is a natural option for treating seborrheic dermatitis. The belief is that artificial UV radiation from phototherapy may curb <i>Malassezia</i> yeast.



Questions to Ask

These questions will help you start a conversation with your doctor about how to manage seborrheic dermatitis.

About Symptoms

- What does seborrheic dermatitis look like?
- Is it contagious?
- Where do symptoms appear?
- Does having oily skin worsen symptoms?

About Causes & Risk Factors

- Is this condition hereditary?
- Are hormonal imbalances a cause?
- Is this condition caused by any allergy?
- Does a compromised immune system affect my risk?

About Diagnosis

- What type of testing will be done?
- Do I need allergy testing?
- Will a biopsy be done?
- Should I be concerned about skin infections?

About Treatment

- What over-the-counter treatments can I try?
- Will I need a stronger, doctor-prescribed medicine?
- Is there a specific shampoo I should use?
- What natural treatments can I try?
- What things about my lifestyle should I change?

About Coping

- What triggers should I avoid?
- Are there certain products I shouldn't use?
- How do I avoid infections?
- How do I manage itching?
- How do I manage stubborn dandruff?
