Seborrheic Dermatitis (Seborrhea)
Cradle Cap

Seborrhea is a condition in which there is reddened, scaly skin. It usually shows up where there are more sebaceous glands. This condition is also known as seborrheic dermatitis or common dandruff. When this condition affects a baby's scalp, it is called cradle cap. It may come and go for no known reason, from infancy to old age.

CAUSES
The cause of this condition is unknown. It is not the result of too little moisture or too much oil. In some people, seborrhea flare-ups seem to be triggered by stress.

SYMPTOMS
- Thick scales on the scalp.
- Redness on the face or in the armpits.
- Raw, red patches below the breasts.
- Some of these conditions may feel dry, but moisturizers do not help. The skin may also seem oily.
- In infants, seborrhea appears as a scaly redness that does not seem to bother the baby. In some babies, it affects only the scalp, but in others, it also involves the neck creases, behind the ears, armpits or groin.
- In adults and adolescents, seborrhea may affect only the scalp. It may look patchy or spread out, with areas of redness and flaking. Other skin areas commonly affected include:
  - Eyebrows.
  - Eyelids.
  - Forehead.
  - Outer ear.
  - Chest.
  - Underarms.
  - Nose creases.
  - Skin creases under the breasts.
  - Skin between the buttocks.
  - Groin.
- Some adults and adolescents feel itchy or burning in areas of seborrhea. Others have no problems.

DIAGNOSIS
Your caregiver can usually tell what the problem is by an examination.

TREATMENT
Things that help seborrhea include:
- Cortisone creams and lotions (decreases inflammation).
- Babies with seborrhea can use baby oil to soften the scales, and then wash with baby shampoo. If this does not help, anti-seborrheic shampoos should work.
- Adults with seborrhea can also use anti-seborrheic shampoos including Head & Shoulders®, Selsun Blue®, Exelderm and others your caregiver may suggest to you.
- Your caregiver may prescribe corticosteroid cream and shampoo containing ketoconazole (an anti-fungal or yeast medication). Hydrocortisone or anti-yeast cream can be rubbed directly into seborrhea patches. Yeast does not cause seborrhea, but it seems to add to the problem.

PROGNOSIS
- In infants, seborrhea usually is the worst during the first year of life. It tends to disappear on its own as the child grows. However, it may return during the teenage years.
- In adults and adolescents, seborrhea tends to be a long standing condition that comes and goes over many years.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:
- You do not obtain relief from the medicated shampoos, lotions, or other medications given to you by your caregiver.

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