Stasis Dermatitis
Varicose Eczema

Stasis dermatitis is a condition due to poor venous circulation in the legs. It causes a reddish-purple to brownish scaly, itchy rash on the legs. The rash comes from "stasis" or the pooling of blood.

CAUSES
This occurs because the veins do not work very well anymore or because pressure may be increased in the veins from other conditions. With blood pooling, the increased pressure in the capillaries (tiny blood vessels) causes fluid to leak out of the capillaries into the tissue. The extra fluid makes it harder for the blood to feed the cells and get rid of waste products.

SYMPTOMS
The tissue becomes poorly nourished and fragile. Itching and scratching may cause infection. This can lead to long standing leg ulcers and cellulitis (redness and soreness below the skin). After healing there are often brown spots on the affected skin. Spots come from the pigment left behind by broken down red blood cells. The problem is common on the ankles and lower legs.

DIAGNOSIS
This is a diagnosis your caregiver easily makes by examination. Other studies may be done to understand the cause better.

TREATMENT
If underlying conditions are present, they must be treated. Some of these conditions are congestive heart failure, thyroid problems, poor nutrition, and varicose veins.

- Applications of steroid based creams and antibiotic creams or ointments may help with the itching and decrease the inflammation (redness and soreness).
- Diuretics (water pills) are sometimes used to get rid of extra fluid.
- Compression stockings or elastic wraps can help force the built up fluids back into the vessels.
- When sitting, rest and elevations of the legs help. When elevating the legs is not possible, getting up and moving around frequently is helpful. Try to rest your legs above the elevation of your heart.
- Burrow's solution wet packs applied for 30 minutes three times daily will help the weepy rash. Watch so that your skin does not become too dry.
- A mixture of 3 parts of white vinegar to 1 part water can be used as a less expensive soak.
- Moisten your legs daily with Vaseline to fight dryness.
- Avoid scratching or injuring the area.

PROGNOSIS
- Skin infections are likely.
- Scar formation can happen after years of problems.
- Long standing leg ulcers may fail to heal.
- Osteomyelitis (infection of underlying bone) rarely happens.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:
- Your rash worsens.
- An ulcer forms.
- If you develop a fever or an area on your leg becomes red, warm or swollen.

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