



## **SEBORRHEIC DERMATITIS**

Seborrheic dermatitis is a rash on the sebum-rich areas of the scalp, face, and trunk. It can be aggravated by changes in humidity, changes in seasons, trauma (eg, scratching), or emotional stress.

The prevalence rate of seborrheic dermatitis is 3-5%. Dandruff, the mildest form of this dermatitis, is probably far more common and is present in an estimated 15-20% of the population.

The usual onset occurs with puberty. It peaks at age 40 years and is less severe, but present, among older people. In infants, it occurs as cradle cap.

### **Clinical**

Intermittent, active phases of seborrheic dermatitis manifest with burning, scaling, and itching, alternating with inactive periods. Activity is increased in winter and early spring, with remissions commonly occurring in summer.

Distribution follows the oily and hair-bearing areas of the head and the neck, such as the scalp, the forehead, the eyebrows, the lash line, the nasolabial folds, the beard, and the post auricular skin. An extension to submental skin can occur, as well as, the umbilicus, axillae, inframammary and inguinal folds, perineum, or anogenital crease.

### **Causes**

Malassezia organisms are probably not the cause but are a cofactor linked to increased sebum levels, adolescence, and dandruff.

### **Treatment**

Topical corticosteroids are commonly used short-term. The dermatitis also responds to antifungal treatment including ketoconazole. Alternatives include calcineurin inhibitors (ie, pimecrolimus, tacrolimus), sulfur or sulfonamide combinations, or propylene glycol.

Dandruff responds to more frequent shampooing or a longer period of lathering. Shampoos containing salicylic acid, tar, selenium, sulfur, or zinc are effective and may be used in an alternating schedule. Overnight occlusion of tar, bath oil, or Baker's P & S solution may help to soften thick scalp plaques. Derma-Smooth F/S oil is especially helpful when widespread scalp

plaques are present. Selenium sulfide (2.5%), ketoconazole, and ciclopirox shampoos may help by reducing Malassezia yeast scalp reservoirs. Shampoos may be used on truncal lesions or in beards.