



Itchy Skin (Pruritus)

WHAT CAUSES ITCHY SKIN?

Itchy skin may be caused by one or more of these:

- Skin conditions (e.g., dry skin—which is the most common, eczema, psoriasis, insect bites).
- Allergic reactions or irritation (e.g., wool, soaps, chemicals).
- Nerve conditions (e.g., shingles).
- Underlying conditions (e.g., low iron, diabetes, anxiety, kidney or liver disease).
- Sometimes the cause may be unknown.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO MANAGE ITCHY SKIN?

- Bathe using lukewarm, not hot, water.
- Use scent-free soaps and detergents for bathing and laundry. Avoid fabric softener.
- Trim fingernails and keep them clean.
- Apply plenty of moisturizer to itchy areas (look for ones with urea or glycerol).
- Use anti-itch creams. Some examples are Cerave, Aveeno, and Gold Bond.
- Use humidifiers and keep room temperatures cool.
- Apply cold compresses to any itchy areas.
- Try not to scratch or rub as this makes the itch worse.



WHY SHOULD YOU AVOID SCRATCHING?

- The more you scratch the area, the itchier it becomes, creating an itch-scratch cycle.
- Continuing to scratch the itch can damage the skin and cause infection or scars.

WHAT IS PRURITUS?

Pruritus is skin that itches and makes you want to scratch.

The skin may look normal, red, rough, or bumpy.

Skin often becomes drier with age, which can feel itchy.



SEEK HELP IF YOUR ITCH:

1. Lasts for several weeks, even after home management measures.
2. Disrupts your daily routines.
3. Is not your only symptom, especially if you have any of these:
 - Weight loss.
 - Night sweats.
 - Fever.
 - Yellow colour of skin.
 - Not making any pee.
 - Nausea and vomiting.

NOTES

