

Transcript Details

This is a transcript of an educational program. Details about the program and additional media formats for the program are accessible by visiting: <https://reachmd.com/programs/dermconsult/infant-eczema-burden-families/60651/>

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The Hidden Burden of Infant Eczema: Supporting Patients and Families

Announcer:

Welcome to *DermConsult* on ReachMD. Today, we'll learn about the burden of infant eczema on families with Dr. Mariam Iqneibi. She's a pediatric dermatologist at Cincinnati Children's Hospital and an Assistant Professor of Dermatology at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine. Here's Dr. Iqneibi now.

Dr. Iqneibi:

I think that a lot of people just look at the skin, and they forget to look at the bigger picture. So for me, I always make sure to look at the patient as a whole.

Sometimes a baby will present with what looks like mild eczema, right? There are only a few scattered patches here and there. It doesn't look that bad, but the baby is miserable, and the parents are just as miserable, if not more miserable, because the baby's not sleeping well, the baby's not gaining weight, and the baby is very irritable.

So it just leads to this cycle. The parents are trying to calm the eczema down, because a lot of parents, I think, see their baby suffering and they feel like it's them. Is it the food that they're giving their baby? Is it the product they're giving their baby? And they run into this fatigue where they're trying so many different things and so many different products, and they're trying so many different food elimination strategies, and nothing seems to work.

So I always try to hear the parents out. I say, "I understand. Yes, I know I'm maybe not seeing the worst eczema that's presenting today. Your baby has probably had worse eczema in the past, and of course, you're coming here today, and it's not that bad." Or I say, "I understand that the eczema doesn't look severe, but the baby's miserable. You're miserable." To me, it's really important to validate and treat as aggressively as possible.

I also like to ask about feeding, because that's super important. A lot of parents, and understandably so, will try to eliminate a lot of foods from the baby's diet or from their own diet if they're breastfeeding. And that can cause a lot of mental fatigue. So I always try to reassure them that this is usually not related to a food allergy. You do not need to eliminate foods. If anything, the babies have to get exposed to these foods at this age, because that's the age where their body's learning and growing. And eczema is more complex than that. It's not related to if you eliminate this particular food, and then that's it, their eczema is going to improve. It's a combination of factors.

So those are all things that I try to discuss with families to reassure them, to understand their quality of life, and to give them techniques and treatment strategies that are both feasible for them to use at home and will improve their baby's sleep.

Announcer:

That was Dr. Mariam Iqneibi sharing how to help families navigate infant eczema. To access this and other episodes in our series, visit *DermConsult* on ReachMD.com, where you can Be Part of the Knowledge. Thanks for listening!