

A Pathophysiologic Basis for Evidence-Based Treatment of Moderate-Severe Atopic Dermatitis



Patient Experience: Deon

I was diagnosed with atopic dermatitis at 32 years old. Before I was diagnosed with atopic dermatitis, the symptoms that I saw at that time were basically scaly, dry skin. Sometimes it would go into blisters. Those 2 elements were pretty much what I had before I was diagnosed and most of my dermatitis affected me from my neck down to my toes. During that time, the symptom that bothered me most with the dermatitis was the blisters on my skin. That was the most dramatic part of the dermatitis.

What impact did these symptoms have on your life?

Usually the symptoms didn't bother me, but if I said that they did bother me it would be during the spring and summer months where you have pollen falling onto the skin and that would set off the eczema. Which would cause me to scratch from the itching, and that would be the most uncomfortable part of it.

What I did to manage my symptoms with atopic dermatitis, was to use topical creams. Some non-fragrance lotions. For example, Aveeno. Other than that I would use coconut oil. Any type of topical cream or oil without any fragrance I would use to pacify my skin. And that would help as far as to keep it moisturized during the day and during the night. Just more of a pacification with the creams, but it really would not solve the problem.

I went to seek a physician for the atopic dermatitis due to the fact that my symptoms became worse. It became worse as far as I itched more and the blisters were noticeable more. I saw myself scratching more and on different parts of my body, body parts that would have breakouts, and I knew something was not right, so I went to seek a physician and to get treatment.

About 10 years ago, when I first went to see a physician, I told him what was going on and he started me off with steroid injections in the buttocks. And, during that time I had 2 buttock injections of steroids. That would help to pacifying the breakouts, but it did not solve the problem. It became worse and worse. So, he started giving me tablets, which were steroid tablets instead of the steroid injections. The tablets would pretty much just pacify me at that time.

During that time there was more taking of oatmeal baths. I would pour the oatmeal in the bath water and take a 15-20 minute bath and soak my skin in the solution. That would help, but still it just would pacify the skin, but I still had breakouts after. But as far as treatment, baths using oatmeal, that's pretty much what he told me to do.

I can say from using the oatmeal baths, I did see some improvement as far as a decrease in my skin as far as the blisters. The blisters pretty much dried up. And mainly I had the blisters pretty much from my knee down. More on the ankle part of my body. Taking the oatmeal baths daily was very helpful with the eczema and especially with the blisters and the scaling of the skin.

The itching became so severe that it felt like I wanted to scratch my skin with a bristle metal brush. That's how severe the itching was. And fingernails scratching the skin is not good, with the fingernails carrying a lot of germs. I used cream to soothe. I would wash the part that was itching the most and just try to keep it moisturized as much as possible, so that I wouldn't scratch.

I take the dexamethasone for the atopic dermatitis once daily. I do my best to take it early in the morning. Sometimes I take it in the afternoon because I have to eat food before I take the tablet. The dexamethasone has been a great help as far as slowing down the breakouts. I am just tired of taking the tablets all together.

It's very rare that I itch when I take the meds. Or when I take the dexamethasone it's very rare that I itch. If I do itch, it's when I am outside and pollen gets on my skin. Like now the pollen is very heavy so that would be a trigger for me to itch. I have not had any side effects from taking the dexamethasone. Before the dexamethasone it was prednisone 20 mg that I was taking for a little over a year. I gained maybe 30 lbs in approximately a year.

During the week there have been times that I have missed taking the tablet. Maybe 1 or 2 days out of the week. Maybe I've just had a busy day, and I've just forgotten to take the tablet, but that's not good because I just don't want to have a breakout.

I would just like to be free from taking any tablet, any injection, and just being back to normal and just having normal skin.

Are you still doing the, what we call basic management, of bathing, using creams and emollients to keep your skin hydrated? Are you still doing those things on a daily basis?

Yes. On a daily basis I'm using, without taking the tablet, I do just the basic treatments. I try to take a shower under 3 minutes because water can dry out the skin, so I try to get in as quickly as possible and get out. Usually I try to air dry instead of use a towel. Once I am dry to a point, I use a non-fragrance cream on my skin, and I try to moisturize as much as possible. Also, besides the cream, I use a non-fragrance soap. I use a body lotion with no fragrance.

I would say that I am much better now than in the past. I would say from the basic treatments of the baths, showers, as far as using the body soap with no fragrance and the cream and just keep my skin as moisturized as possible has been very helpful. I feel better now than I've felt in the past 5 years.