

▶ Pediculosis

Pediculosis is an infection of the skin caused by lice (figure 12.15). The affected body region is indicated by the name: pediculosis capitis is caused by the head louse, pediculosis corporis by the body louse, and pediculosis pubis by the crab louse. Lice of this third type infest hairs of the genital region; infestation is commonly referred to as crabs. The most prevalent symptom is severe itching. Pediculosis is transmitted through direct contact with infected patients. Treatment includes physician referral for medication to eradicate the parasite. Thorough laundering of clothing and bed linens is also necessary.

▶ Scabies

Scabies is caused by the itch mite. The impregnated female mite burrows into the skin and deposits her eggs in the tunnel. The larvae hatch and accumulate around hair follicles. Typical signs and symptoms include the appearance of elevated burrows on the skin and itching. The most common sites are the interdigital spaces of the hands and the axilla, trunk, and genital regions (figure 12.16).

Inflammatory Conditions

Inflammatory conditions are integumentary conditions that cause localized and regional inflammation of the skin. These conditions are often characterized by redness, soreness, itching, burning, and swelling.

▶ Dermatitis

Dermatitis is simply defined as an inflammation of the skin. Contact dermatitis, the most common dermatitis condition, is a delayed reaction to direct contact with an allergen (figure 12.17). It is characterized by erythema, edema, itching, and vesiculations of varying degrees. The first step in treatment is to remove the offending substance.



Photo courtesy of Kenneth E. Greer.

Figure 12.15 Pediculosis capitis.



Photo courtesy of Kenneth E. Greer.

Figure 12.16 Scabies.



Photo courtesy of Kenneth E. Greer.

Figure 12.17 Contact dermatitis.

▶ Eczema

Eczema is the generic term used to describe chronic dermatitis. It is characterized by scaling, erythematous, edematous, papular, vesicular, crusty skin and is often accompanied by itching and burning (figure 12.18). As with other forms of dermatitis, removing the irritant is key to treatment.



Photo courtesy of Kenneth E. Greer.

Figure 12.18 Eczema.

▶ Psoriasis

Psoriasis is a usually chronic condition of unknown etiology that exhibits characteristic eruptions on the extensor surfaces of the extremities, especially the elbows, knees, back, and scalp (figure 12.19). The eruptions are circumscribed, erythematous papules covered with silvery scales.



Photo courtesy of Kenneth E. Greer.

Figure 12.19 Psoriasis.

Environmental Exposures

Other skin conditions occur due to environmental factors such as allergens and exposure to heat or cold, chemicals, and poisons. Signs and symptoms of these conditions differ according to source of irritant.

▶ Hives

Hives, or urticaria, is a dermal hypersensitivity reaction to an allergen. Common allergens include any substance that causes an abnormal reaction upon exposure, such as insect bites, foods, dust, mold, or certain medications. A **wheal** formation that occurs on the skin can range from small red dots to large, raised, reddened areas (figure 12.20).



Photo courtesy of Kenneth E. Greer.

Figure 12.20 Hives in a wheal formation.