

skin disorders

The skin is the body's largest organ and we often find that skin conditions are the expression of an imbalance within the body. This means that the treatment of what may seem to be superficial and isolated symptoms actually requires a more thorough consultation and course of treatment than the home prescriber is able to ascertain by looking at the skin symptoms alone.

While skin ailments can be difficult to treat and often need a constitutional prescription, the following remedies may provide symptomatic relief. However, it is important for the home prescriber to know when to seek advice from an experienced practitioner. Even then, chronic conditions can take patience and a long course of treatment to resolve.

Itchy rashes and eczema: **Apis** is indicated for urticaria where the skin lesion is swollen, hot, red, very itchy and burning; symptoms are worse for heat, and better for cold applications. For burning pains with severe itching where the person scratches until the skin is raw consider **Arsenicum**. Symptoms are better for heat and warm bathing, and worse at night, and for cold applications. **Graphites** is helpful for dry eczema with a honey like discharge, deep cracks, and skin that is hard, thick and rough; eruptions generally present in the folds of skin. **Nat mur** is indicated for dry, flaky skin and hair and for eczema along the hairline and in the bend of joints. Symptoms are worse from heat, exertion and grief and better for cold. Vesicles and blisters with extreme itchiness and restlessness respond well to **Rhus tox** as do prickly heat, eczema, shingles and chicken pox. **Sepia** is for thickening of the skin, circular eruptions, and dryness that is worse in winter and not usually itchy. Consider **Silica** for unhealthy skin with poor healing, for cracks on fingertips, with symptoms worse in cold weather. **Sulphur** skin is very itchy, red and burning, with scratching until the skin becomes raw; symptoms are worse at night, on becoming warm, and for bathing.

Cold sores: Frequent episodes require a consult, however the following remedies are helpful for acute outbreaks.

Nat mur: At the very first hint of a cold sore can slow the process. There are watery, pearl like blisters on the lips that are puffy and burning. Usually symptoms occur after an acute illness, sun exposure, or emotional upset.

Sepia: For periodic lesions with chapped, raw or cracking skin.

Rhus tox: For itchy, tingling, vesicles that suppurate and leave a crust.

Arsenicum: Intense burning. Lesions may break open and cause small ulcers.



Hepar sulph: For lesions that become filled with yellowish matter; they are very sensitive to touch.

Hives and nettle rash: Often an allergic reaction to foods, chemicals, plants or an insect sting. The first remedy to consider is **Apis** with its stinging pains, and rapid rosy swelling; puffy face and eyelids. **Belladonna** suits hives with sudden onset; a hot, red face and headache. With **Nat mur** there are clear, watery, blister like eruptions, worse from becoming overheated; allergic reaction to insect bites. **Rhus tox** has blisters or a rash, with restlessness, redness and swelling. Intense itching and tingling. **Urtica urens** is similar with intolerable itching, burning and stinging.

Impetigo: Impetigo, or school sores are highly infectious and need immediate treatment.

Ant crud: Thick, yellow, burning crusts that spread around the nostrils and mouth.

Hepar sulph: Moist lesions with splinter like pains, and very sensitive to touch.

Mercurius: Moist, yellowish-brown crusts or pustules on a red, inflamed base; often with soreness and itching.

Rhus tox: Eruptions in clusters with violent burning, itching, stinging and tingling.

Chicken pox and measles like rashes: Childhood diseases are similar in their clinical evolution. They evolve in the following stages.

1. Incubation. **Ferrum phos**, if patient is feeling off colour.
2. Invasion with fever. Remedy choices include: **Aconite**, **Belladonna**, **Bryonia**, **Gelsemium**.
3. Rash. Select remedies to fit the symptoms. For example, **Apis**, **Pulsatilla**, **Rhus tox**, and **Sulphur**. Also, consider **Carbo veg** for slow recovery with weakness.