



a ray of  
hope through  
patient  
awareness  
and education

# ISDI Information

Newsletter of the Inflammatory Skin Disease Institute

Volume 7 Number 1

## What is Inflammatory Skin Disease?



**I**nflammatory skin disease is characterized by a reaction in the tissue characterized by redness, swelling and discomfort. It can also include itch, rash, blisters and oozing. Inflammatory skin disease is a broad category that includes many conditions ranging in severity from mild itching to serious medical health complications.

Inflammatory skin diseases affect men, women and children. It is a disease that has no borders on race or economic position. These conditions include:

**Eczema:** also known as Atopic dermatitis. A common condition that causes the skin to become dry, itchy and inflamed. Often referred to as the “itch that rashes”. Itching results in scratching, scratching inflames the skin, inflamed skin itches more and the cycle continues.

**Acne:** Inflammatory skin disease associated with increased activity of the sebaceous (oil secreting) glands. Openings to the glands become clogged leading to formation of blackheads, whiteheads, pustules, pimples and cysts.

**Psoriasis:** Inflammatory skin disease characterized by one or more red plaques covered with whitish-silvery scales. Joints may also be affected.

**Rosacea:** Inflammatory skin disease characterized by flushing and redness, appearing especially in the center areas of the face. Pimples and pustules may appear.

**Dermatitis:** Inflammation of the skin that may affect several areas

- **Seborrheic dermatitis:** scaling of the scalp, face and occasionally other areas;
- **Occupational dermatitis:** job related inflammation, caused by occupational contact factors;
- **Contact dermatitis:** inflammation caused by chemical contact and sources in our environment.(see poison ivy)

**Pyoderma Gangrenosum:** An inflammatory ulcerative, painful condition of uncertain etiology.

**Poison Ivy:** An inflammatory allergic reaction that is the most common allergy in the United States characterized by allergic rash after contact with the poisonous plant. Poison oak and poison sumac are also plants that can cause an allergic reaction.

Many of these conditions are often considered minor ailments by the general public, HOWEVER they can be very serious to the people, family and caregivers who are affected by them. Most inflammatory skin diseases are chronic, with no cure. Many cause disfigurement. Treatments can be expensive and tedious.

Inflammatory skin disease can cause sleepless nights affecting the work force and the child in school. Healthcare cost impacts our economy, causing an undue burden.

**INFLAMMATORY SKIN DISEASE DOES AFFECT THE QUALITY OF LIFE.** The Inflammatory Skin Disease Institute is dedicated to improving the lives of people with inflammatory skin disease.



Published by the  
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Disease Institute (ISDI)**  
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If you would like to be added to  
our mailing list please contact the  
ISDI office at the address above.

**Mission**

The goal of the Inflammatory  
Skin Disease Institute (ISDI) is  
to promote public awareness  
and enhanced treatment of  
inflammatory skin diseases  
through education, research,  
and patient advocacy.

# Director's Message



**Happy Spring!**

This is a beautiful  
time of year. So  
many look forward  
to April showers and  
May flowers. I have  
seen first hand how  
for people with skin

disorders it is not always the best time  
of year with temperature changes,  
pollen, sun and other irritants that  
may affect the skin. It is important to  
protect your skin.

The Inflammatory Skin Disease  
Institute remains dedicated to  
improving the lives of people with

skin disorders. We provide programs,  
educational materials, and support to  
physicians, patients and families,  
working with medical schools,  
hospitals, caregivers and school nurses  
- free of charge. Working together  
can provide a better understanding of  
skin disease.

Have a Happy and Comfortable  
Spring,

LaDonna Williams  
Executive Director  
ISDI

## Dedicated to Improving the Lives of People with Inflammatory Skin Disease



*LaDonna Williams, Executive  
Director of ISDI, addresses the  
American Academy of  
Dermatology on "Patients and  
the FDA" at the 65<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Meeting in Washington, DC.*

*Working  
together with  
Redex  
Industries  
providing  
education and  
awareness of  
skin Disease.*



*ISDI goes to  
Washington, DC.  
The 65<sup>th</sup> annual  
meeting brought  
dermatology from  
around the world.  
Approximately  
17,000 people  
attended the sessions  
and programs.*



*Sharing information  
on skin disease at  
the AAD conference  
in Washington, DC.*

## Letters to the Editor:

Dear ISDI:

My teenage son has acne on his back and  
shoulders. Besides the fact that it can be  
uncomfortable, it is also an  
embarrassment to him. He has been  
wearing the DermaSmart undershirts and  
what a difference wearing them has made.  
His acne is clearing up and he says his  
back is no longer itchy. I am a long time  
reader of your newsletter and just wanted  
to share our good news.

Editors note: We have a link to the  
DermaSmart website from ours:  
[www.isdionline.org](http://www.isdionline.org) go to the resources  
page and click on DermaSmart.

Dear ISDI,

What you are doing for eczema patients is  
fantastic!

S.W., Switzerland

Thank you so much for your educational  
calendar. Not only are they a perfect size  
but the information that is included on  
each month is quite helpful. Keep up the  
good work!

J.W./dermatology

**Announcing our newest  
brochure:**

**"Your Child has Eczema"  
-available in Spanish.**





## Tasteless Comments

If you are a person with a skin disease, or the parent of a child with a skin disease, you have undoubtedly been faced with those rude, crude, and even well meaning people asking “those questions.”

Do you have any snappy comebacks that you want so much to say, or actually have said? Send us your responses and you might see yours in print.

**Editor’s Note:** The purpose of this section is three-fold: 1) it is an opportunity educate and make the public aware of the disorder; 2) it lets society know it is not appropriate to stare and ask hurtful questions, and 3) it is an opportunity to let off steam with a touch of humor, allowing us to laugh.

“My 13 year old son was at a cook-out recently. Due to his somewhat severe acne, several people stared. One young man asked if my son was allergic to bees. It seems the young man was allergic to bees and when he was stung, had a difficult reaction that affected his face.

Is there some way we can make people less hurtful?! I have read the tasteless comments in the *ISDInformation* before. Feel free to use this if it could help.”

– R.W.



## ISDI IN THE FASTLANE

Thanks to racecar owners Stuart and Peggy Hopkin, ISDI is moving fast with information on inflammatory skin disease. Race car driver Stuart Hopkin understands how skin disease can impact one’s life. “It can affect your lifestyle, it is important to keep on moving,” says family member and mother Hazel Hopkins.

“It is our pleasure to help with awareness of skin disease” says Peggy Hopkin.

**THANK YOU TO THE HOPKINS FAMILY! GO! GO! GO!**



## PENPALS

Reach out to others and share challenges and triumphs in dealing with your disease. Patients often look to others in similar situations to discuss treatments, feelings, etc. The following readers have asked for their names to be presented as possible pen pals. If you are looking for support from someone who has the same disease as you, contact any of the readers listed below. Also, to be added to the list, send your name, address, phone, and/or e-mail to  
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## THANK YOU! THANK YOU MARK DAHL, MD

ISDI has been honored by your 5 years of service to the Scientific Advisory Board. As Master Dermatologist you have helped ISDI meet our goal of “improving the lives of people with skin disorders”. Your invaluable service will always be appreciated. Thank you again. Good luck in your future endeavors.

## CONGRATULATIONS!

It is such an honor to have David Pariser, MD serve on the ISDI Scientific Advisory Board. Dr. Pariser is the newly elected President of the American Academy of Dermatology for 2009.



# MAY is

## Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month



Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. Approximately 80% + of all skin cancers are caused by sun exposure. People with inflammatory skin disease may react differently to the sun and its rays. Use caution.

There is no such thing as a safe tan. Block the sun not the fun. Protect your skin.

### Sun Safety Tips:

Avoid peak hours. Try to plan activities in the early part of the day or late afternoon. Seek shade when possible. Wear protective clothing such as hats, sunglasses.

Use broad spectrum sun screen of at least 15 spf. There are several types of sunscreen —gels, sprays, creams and lotions. Your dermatologist may have specific suggestions if you have skin disease issues. 1oz. is a recommended application which is about the size of a golf ball. Apply to all exposed areas even on shady days and year round.

### The APPLES study

is a long-term safety study of Protopic® (tacrolimus) Ointment in the treatment of subjects with atopic dermatitis under actual use conditions, including the risk of developing cutaneous or systemic malignancies. For more information call: The APPLES study center at 1.877.277.7530.



# WELCOME TO OUR BOARD



The Inflammatory Skin Disease Institute is pleased to welcome Sharon Jacob, MD to our Inflammatory Skin Disease Institute Scientific Advisory Board. Presently Dr. Jacob is Director of the Contact Dermatitis Clinic, Director of Medical Student Education with the Dept. of Dermatology & Cutaneous Surgery at the University of Miami in Miami Florida. It is an honor to have Dr. Jacob who earned her B.A. in Molecular Biology from Hampshire College, Amherst, Mass.; and her MD from Temple University School of Medicine, Philadelphia, Pa. Dr. Jacob attended dermatology residency training at the Jackson Memorial Hospital - Univ. of Miami, Miami, Fl.; and interned at Dept. of Medicine, The Reading Hospital and Medical Center, Reading, Pa. Her dedication to dermatology will be an asset to the Inflammatory Skin Disease Institute.



Dr. Nicholas Orfan has practiced allergy and immunology in Hagerstown, MD since 1996. He is an associate professor of medicine at West Virginia University School of Medicine in Morgantown, WV. Prior to that, he served as attending physician in allergy and immunology at Bassett Healthcare in Cooperstown, NY from 1991-1996 where he was assistant professor of clinical medicine, Columbia University. He received his M.D. from Northwestern University in Chicago, Ill. He completed his residency in internal medicine at Boston City Hospital in Boston, MA. He completed his allergy/immunology training at Northwestern University in Chicago, Ill. He is a fellow of both the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology and the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology. He has served on the editorial board of the Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology and is a member of the American College of Physicians.

## Expert on Call:

The Inflammatory Skin Disease Institute welcomes questions from readers. Please call us 757-223-0795; email: Ruthann.newton@isdionline.org or write ISDI, P.O. Box 1074, Newport News, VA 23601 with your medical question. ISDI will forward your question to our "Expert on Call".

### Q: Is there a specific sunblock that is best to use for toddlers?

A: Children under 6 months of age should be kept out of the sun, with sun-protective clothing and hats being the best way to go with children. Sunscreens should not be applied to children under 6 months (they could have adverse side effects). In older children -sun protective clothing and in sun exposed areas lotion based sunscreens can be used:

### Formaldehyde and Fragrance Free Sunscreens: SUN CARE PRODUCTS

- vanicream sunblock spf-35, pharmaceutical specialties, inc.
- vanicream sunscreen for sensitive skin - spf-30, pharmaceutical specialties, inc.
- vanicream sunscreen for sensitive skin - spf-60, pharmaceutical specialties, inc.
- vanicream sunscreen spf 35 sport, pharmaceutical specialties, inc.
- armada face and body shield 30, vmv hypoallergenic
- clinique sun care body gel spf 15 sunscreen, estee lauder
- mary kay sun essentials lip protector sunblock spf 15, mary kay inc.
- vmv hypoallergenic armada face cover 45
- vmv hypoallergenic armada face cover 30
- vmv hypoallergenic armada face & body shield 60
- vmv hypoallergenic armada sport 70, vmv hypoallergenic





Alison Whitaker

The greatest achievement in my life was conquering my battle with eczema. From the age of twelve to sixteen, I was down-trodden because of my skin condition. I battled with this ailment for four years, until I finally chose to accept myself and increase my self-confidence. This change allowed me to improve other's lives; I instill the wisdom I gain for myself in them. The final result of this experience was uncovering who I am and being the mature young adult who is prepared for the world of higher learning.

Eczema became a part of my life at the age of twelve. I was bound to this simple dry skin condition until just recently in my life. I was afraid to shake hands with people or write around them because they would constantly stare at my skin. I was certain that no one would ever want to be around a girl with ugly scabs and flakes on her hands, arms, and neck. My family constantly worried over me and my condition. I was very shy and never spoke up for myself against those who ridiculed me. My self-esteem was at an all time low. I also thought that any person who showed the slightest interest in me was automatically my friend. The power of eczema over my childhood was so overwhelming that I was nearly depressed at the age of thirteen.

In the midst of this dilemma, I changed schools. I went from a small private school, where the total number of fifth graders was twenty, to a larger private school (at least to me) with a sixth grade class of sixty. I was the brightest student in my class at my former school, but at The Oakridge School I was beginning to feel average. The amount of stress in changing to a significantly more academically challenging school caused my eczema to worsen. Whenever I was asked about my rash, my reply was always "nothing," or "what are you talking about?" I believed that if I did not give this rash any attention, then it would just go away. The medication my physician prescribed only cured me for a short period of time and this brief duration of healing caused me to experience hopelessness.

At the beginning of my junior year, I began to build up confidence in myself and instilling all of the powerful words that I could within me. I knew that God would not allow me to waste my intelligence on feeling sorry for myself. My family saw that I was growing up and encouraged me to keep moving forward. I grew in my relationship with God and my relationships with other people were helping me come out of my naïveté. My eczema was still apparent, but with my stress levels down and my self-esteem up, I grew to be self-aware and confident in myself.

In the present, I know who I am. I am Alison Mykel Whitaker. I am no longer defined by a dry skin condition. When someone asks me, "What is that on your hand?" I proudly tell them what eczema is and how I acquired it. Instead of shyly running away from their questions, I answer them and teach them something new. The growth of self-security in my life has allowed me to mature. I have begun making responsible decisions; whether it is being aware of the drivers around me while on the road or making the right decision even if it is not the popular choice. This maturity and wisdom I have obtained, has permitted me to be somewhat of a mentor to my younger siblings and my peers. My life is far from perfect, but I am growing mentally and spiritually everyday; that is the closest thing to perfect I can attain.



Lexis Telischak

Throughout my school years, I have strived to accomplish my goals in life despite severe health problems. At the age of three months, I was diagnosed with a severe case of eczema, allergies and asthma that has made it hard for me to work and dedicate myself to academics, but I have still managed to achieve under these circumstances. These conditions have taught me many lessons in life that I am grateful to have learned. I feel that the eczema, allergies and asthma have helped develop my character and my morals. To overcome these obstacles I have had to remain adaptable in many different ways and situations. I have cultivated patience in working with my own condition and its limitations, as well as compassion for others who are afflicted with any sort of health problems. I am thankful to those who have helped me through the years: my family, doctors, teachers, and friends.

During my youth and as recently as last year, I have suffered from a relentless case of Atopic Dermatitis, more commonly known as eczema. At times this health problem would escalate into a life-threatening situation. As much as 90% of my body would be covered in open sores, and the only relief doctors could offer would be to spend hours soaking and wrapping myself in wet bandages. Often, I would not be able to attend classes and at one point I was using a wheelchair due to the severity of the condition. Allergies made it impossible for me to eat many common foods, so I had to and still must follow a strict diet. During High School it was difficult to maintain good grades when my eczema kept me at home, but in spite of this I have still worked my hardest and strived to do well in school. In the end this has paid off and I have grown as an individual as a result of my struggle.

My health condition has kept me from becoming involved in extracurricular school and community activities. Although I would have loved to be more involved in outside activities, most of my time and energy was required to maintain my health sufficiently to attend school and make up the work that I had missed so I could keep a good grade point average. Thus, I unfortunately do not have a great deal of activities to include on my resume, and my health issues are the reason why.

The lessons that I have learned from enduring these hardships are priceless. I have learned that dedication, honesty, and integrity are good qualities that I possess. I relied upon these qualities to help me cope with my eczema and asthma. Learning from growing up with these conditions has turned out to be a positive experience for me, even if there were some difficult times to go through. Persevering through my physical limitations has made me a stronger individual and I am grateful for having had these experiences to learn from.

Many people would take these experiences and see them as a handicap, but I have chosen to learn from them and hold on to what I have learned. In turn for the challenging times that I have gone through, I have received something far greater than I could have asked for: a good perspective on life and a sense of what truly matters. Along with this I have learned how to be a responsible student and member of my community. I have enjoyed playing and teaching tennis to children as an instructor for the City of Boulder. I believe that the qualities I have acquired in my life thus far will enable me to be a valuable and caring member of the CU community.

I now am looking forward to continuing my education at the University of Colorado. Thank you for considering my scholarship application.



Christy Surace

There I stood, partially naked in the bright tiled bathroom as my mom examined the peculiar speckling of irritated red marks spanning across the surface of my stomach and extending around to my back. We reviewed the history of my recent past in order to determine an obvious explanation. The angry red infringement seemed to have appeared overnight and stood its ground. A day passed, and more dots appeared. I was a second grader home after a sleepover at my friend's house. It turns out the skin irritation was not from an allergy or a bug that possibly violated my sleeping bag the night prior.

After a skin biopsy and physical examination, I was diagnosed with Guttate Psoriasis. I have tried everything from using prescribed ointments to following a strict schedule of taking 61 nutritional pills daily for three weeks. Nothing seems to work. The main sores that erupt without warning and remain for months at a time are in unattractive colonies on my upper back. Then there are the devious blotches that sprout overnight at the most inconvenient times on my arms, legs, and neck. Makeup only makes it more

obvious, so I try to ignore it and the questions I receive in its regard; however, the insecurities and self-consciousness I have cultivated over time are undeniable.

I wish I could say Psoriasis has made me stronger and more confident because I've learned to cope, but that would be a lie. At best, I'm slowly adapting to Psoriasis on a daily basis. If anything, having a skin disease has taught me how superficial society is and how overly involved we are with outer appearance. My greatest concern in choosing a dress for a high school dance is if any skin will be exposed that contains an extensive amount of psoriasis. If I'm experiencing an embarrassing outbreak, I will readily make other excuses as to why I'm "not in the mood" to go swimming with friends. When people ask what that peculiar mark is under my car, I'll pretend I don't hear them or I'll mumble, "It's kind of like eczema" and stealthily redirect the conversation. For the majority of my life, I hid under long sleeved shirts and hair almost down to my elbows.

While other girls my age are plunging their bodies into cancer beds for the sake of a "healthy tan," I'm applying layers of ointment in a futile attempt to control outbreaks, or at least to feel less vulnerable. My older sister had a severe case of psoriasis when she was my age. I can still recall her standing in the living room in a bikini, exposing her scaly surface to my surprised parents. After many years of pills, light treatment appointments, and extensive medical care, she has gone into remission. I pray to God that I'll never have to go through that and I do believe there is hope for not only me, but also a real cure for all others suffering from Psoriasis. In order to reach this goal, we need to first spread awareness.



# how can I **HELP?**

Yes! I would like to help support the Inflammatory Skin Disease Institute (ISDI).

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

By donating to **ISDI** you will help us provide a ray of hope to people with inflammatory skin disease. An ISDIInformation subscription is given to all donors.

\$25    \$50    \$100    Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Completed form and payment may be sent to: **Inflammatory Skin Disease Institute (ISDI)** P.O. Box 1074, Newport News, VA 23601

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# thank YOU!

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