

Topical Steroid Withdrawal Syndrome (TSW)

An adverse effect from using topical corticosteroids to treat the skin.



AGE: 5 MONTHS
5 WEEKS TSW



AGE: 7 MONTHS
3.5 MONTHS TSW



AGE: 13 MONTHS
10 MONTHS TSW



AGE: 3 YEARS
40 MONTHS TSW

Topical steroids appear to be effective in treating the original skin condition for a period of time. Treatment becomes less effective over time, as burning, weeping, flaking skin, spreads all over the body – even when treating more areas, more often, with a higher potency topical steroid.



1 MONTH TSW



9 MONTHS TSW



22 MONTHS TSW

Symptoms constitute a syndrome in addition to skin issues: enlarged lymph nodes, edema, altered thermoregulation, hair loss, extreme fatigue, appetite changes, hypersensitivity, nerve pain.



1 MONTH TSW



16 MONTHS TSW



18 MONTHS TSW



32 MONTHS TSW



ECZEMA



TSW

TSW can be mistaken for “worsening” or “severe” eczema, contact dermatitis, or topical steroid allergy.

TSW Syndrome is not eczema and should not be treated like eczema. Recovery requires discontinuing use of topical steroids, resulting in a cluster of steroid withdrawal symptoms. TSW Syndrome comes with severe secondary complications. Many sufferers are bed-ridden and housebound for months to years before symptoms abate.



ITSAN IS HERE TO HELP.

Our goal is to raise awareness of Topical Steroid Withdrawal Syndrome and support all affected individuals.

Learn more at: ITSAN.org

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Identifying Topical Steroid Withdrawal (TSW)

What looks like “Worsening Eczema” can actually be due to Corticosteroid Treatment

ECZEMA

VS

TSW SYNDROME

Etiology: Spontaneous. Occasional family history of eczema

Itchy

Flakey

Patches

Patches cycle, resolve, clear, and include periods of remission post treatment with topical steroid

Symptoms are skin-related: skin discomfort, sleep disruption, and self-consciousness

Etiology: History of topical steroid use with progressive exacerbation of original condition

Burning, stinging, incessant itch

Constant, profuse shedding of skin flakes (“snowing”)

Diffuse, flushing rashes; erythema; general skin vasodilation; weeping/oozing

Rebound flares usually occur within days post topical steroid therapy, with increasing severity. Diligent topical steroid therapy becomes less effective over time with little or no period of remission

Symptoms constitute a syndrome in addition to skin issues: enlarged lymph nodes, edema, altered thermoregulation, hair loss, extreme fatigue, appetite changes, hypersensitivity, nerve pain

What to Look for While Using Topical Steroids (the beginning stages of TSA or Topical Steroid Addiction):

- Rebound redness between applications
- Rashes spreading and developing in new areas of the body
- Intense itching, burning, stinging
- Failure to clear with usual course of treatment, requiring a higher potency topical steroid to achieve less clearing
- Increased allergic response

Some Typical Symptoms Following Discontinuation of Steroids (can take days, weeks or months to present):

- Skin flushing bright red, resembling a sunburn
- Visible and measurable flaking of skin – appears to be ‘snowing’
- Oozing exudate
- Skin cycling between oozing, swelling, burning, and flaking
- Red sleeves: (arms/legs become red and inflamed, sparing palms/soles)
- Thermoregulation altered (feeling too cold or too hot)
- Hypersensitivity of the skin to water, movement, moisturizer, fabrics, temperature, etc.
- Nerve pain, sometimes described as “sparklers” or “zingers”
- Enlarged lymph nodes
- Edema
- Eye dryness and irritation
- Skin atrophy (often manifesting as “elephant wrinkles”)
- Hair loss: (head and/or body)
- Insomnia and altered body clock
- Appetite changes
- Fatigue
- Emotional fluctuations, depression, anxiety

ITSAN IS HERE TO HELP.

If you suspect your flaring skin is due to Topical Steroid Treatment, utilize the resources at:

ITSAN.org

