

Pruritus (Chronic Itching)

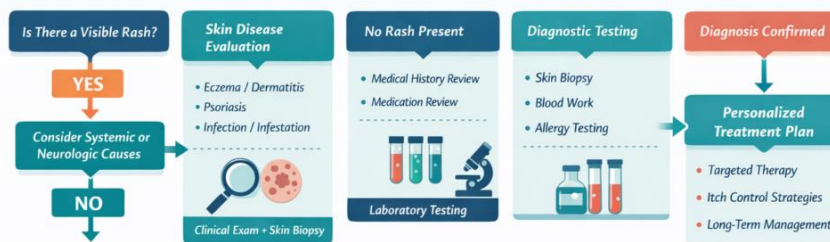
Chronic Pruritus (Itching)

Chronic pruritus is the medical term for **persistent itching lasting longer than six weeks**. It may occur **with or without a visible rash** and can significantly affect sleep, daily comfort, and quality of life.

Because itching can be a sign of **underlying skin disease or internal medical conditions**, proper evaluation by a dermatologist is essential.



How Chronic Itching Is Evaluated



Why Chronic Itching Should Be Evaluated

Persistent itching is not just a nuisance. It may indicate:

- Inflammatory skin disease
- Allergic reactions
- Infection
- Nerve-related conditions
- Internal (systemic) medical disorders

Early diagnosis allows for targeted treatment and helps prevent skin damage from chronic scratching.

Common Causes of Chronic Pruritus

Skin-Related Causes

- Eczema (atopic dermatitis)
- Contact dermatitis (allergic or irritant)
- Psoriasis
- Chronic dry skin (xerosis)
- Fungal or bacterial infections
- Scabies or other infestations

Systemic (Internal) Causes

- Liver disease
- Kidney disease
- Thyroid disorders
- Iron deficiency anemia
- Diabetes
- Pregnancy-related conditions
- Rarely, internal malignancy

Neurologic or Medication-Related Causes

- Nerve-related itch
 - Medication reactions
 - Chemotherapy-associated itch
 - Opioid-related itching
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Pruritus With vs. Without a Rash

Itching With a Rash

Most often linked to:

- Eczema
- Psoriasis
- Allergic reactions
- Infections

👉 Usually diagnosed by **clinical exam**, sometimes supported by **biopsy**.

Itching Without a Rash

More likely associated with:

- Internal medical conditions
- Neurologic causes
- Medication reactions

👉 Often requires **broader medical evaluation** and coordination of care.

How We Evaluate Chronic Pruritus

Our dermatologists take a structured, medical-first approach:

- Comprehensive medical history and medication review
- Full skin examination
- Laboratory testing when indicated
- Skin biopsy if diagnosis is unclear
- Patch testing for allergic causes (when appropriate)

Our goal is to **identify the underlying cause**, not just suppress symptoms.

Treatment Options

Treatment depends on the cause and may include:

- Prescription topical therapies
- Oral medications when indicated
- Treatment of underlying medical conditions
- Skin barrier repair and itch-reduction strategies
- Personalized maintenance plans for chronic conditions


When to Schedule an Appointment

You should seek evaluation if itching:

- Persists longer than 6 weeks
 - Disrupts sleep or daily activities
 - Occurs without a visible rash
 - Does not respond to over-the-counter treatments
 - Is associated with other symptoms (fatigue, weight loss, night sweats)
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Call to Action

Relief starts with the right diagnosis.

 [Request an Appointment for Chronic Itching Evaluation](#)

Chronic Pruritus (Itching) – Frequently Asked Questions

What is chronic pruritus?

Chronic pruritus is persistent itching that lasts **longer than six weeks**. It may occur with visible skin changes or without any rash at all and often requires medical evaluation to determine the underlying cause.

Is itching always caused by a skin problem?

No. While many cases are related to skin conditions like eczema or psoriasis, chronic itching can also be caused by **internal medical conditions, medications, nerve-related issues, or allergic reactions**.

Can I have chronic itching without a rash?

Yes. Chronic itching without a rash can be associated with **systemic conditions** such as liver or kidney disease, thyroid disorders, iron deficiency, medication reactions, or neurologic causes. This type of itching should always be evaluated by a dermatologist.

When should I see a dermatologist for itching?

You should schedule an appointment if itching:

- Lasts longer than **6 weeks**
 - Disrupts sleep or daily activities
 - Does not improve with over-the-counter treatments
 - Occurs without a visible rash
 - Is associated with other symptoms such as fatigue or unexplained weight loss
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How do dermatologists diagnose chronic pruritus?

Diagnosis begins with a **thorough medical history and full skin examination**. Depending on findings, your dermatologist may recommend:

- Blood tests
 - Skin biopsy
 - Allergy (patch) testing
 - Review of medications or systemic health conditions
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Will I need a skin biopsy for itching?

Not always. A biopsy is only recommended when the cause of itching is unclear or when a skin condition needs confirmation. The procedure is quick and performed with local anesthesia.

What treatments are available for chronic itching?

Treatment depends on the underlying cause and may include:

- Prescription topical medications
 - Oral medications
 - Treatment of underlying medical conditions
 - Skin barrier repair strategies
 - Long-term management plans for chronic conditions
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Can scratching make itching worse?

Yes. Scratching can damage the skin barrier, leading to inflammation, infection, and a cycle of worsening itch. Early diagnosis and treatment help prevent this cycle.

Is chronic pruritus a sign of something serious?

In many cases, itching is related to manageable skin conditions. However, persistent itching—especially without a rash—can occasionally signal an internal medical issue, which is why evaluation is important.

Does chronic pruritus go away on its own?

Some mild cases may improve, but **persistent itching usually requires medical treatment** to identify and address the cause. Delaying care can prolong symptoms and skin damage.