

# CHRONICLE PATIENT PRIMER

A tool for patient counselling and adherence. Online at [www.derm.city/primer](http://www.derm.city/primer)

## Facts



Dandruff is common. Half of all North Americans have the skin condition.



Men are more likely to have dandruff.



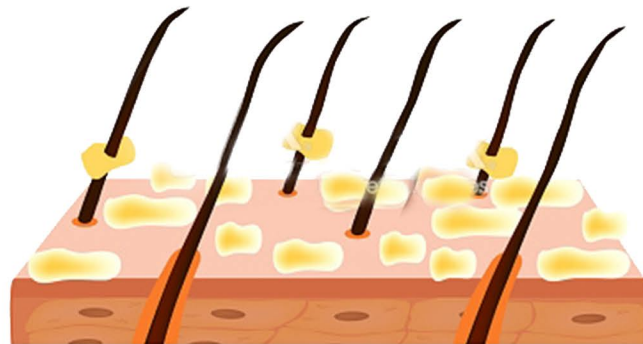
Dandruff is more common in younger adults, so age can be a risk factor.



Infants can have a type of dandruff called cradle cap.



Since dandruff can be aggravated by dry air, the skin condition is more likely to manifest itself in the winter months for many patients.



## DANDRUFF

### Overview

You may already know that dandruff is not a serious or life-threatening skin condition, but you could still be embarrassed by the white flakes that end up in your hair or on your shoulders, and irritated by the itchiness of the condition. For these reasons, you will want to control your dandruff.

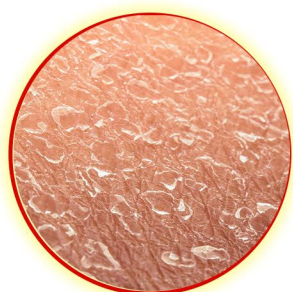
Although most patients with dandruff need not seek medical care, the scalp condition can be tough to treat, so you will appreciate the advice of a dermatologist on which over-the-counter dandruff products to use. That being said, you may also be happy to know that dandruff is not contagious and that it is easily treatable in many cases.

## Symptoms

There are two main symptoms of dandruff: **itching and flaking skin**.

Flaking of the skin of the scalp is what often causes the itching.

As a result of skin flaking, small flecks of white skin may appear on your scalp and fall onto your clothes.



Flaking of the skin



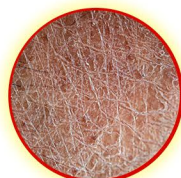
Itching

## Causes

Dandruff can be caused by a number of different factors including:



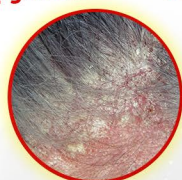
Hygiene



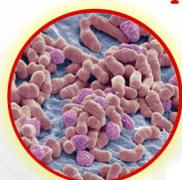
Dry skin



Dry air



Underlying skin conditions such as seborrheic dermatitis, contact dermatitis, eczema, or psoriasis



Fungus such as malassezia

## Treatment



Controlling the oil on your scalp can be a key to controlling dandruff. An oily scalp can trigger over-shedding of skin flakes.

Dandruff can sometimes be treated without the use of any over the counter medications, but in some cases a prescription shampoo may be necessary.

Patients can start by rinsing the scalp with water each day and shampooing two to three times a week. If this is not effective, then a number of medicated dandruff shampoos are available and recommended depending on the cause of the dandruff.

For dandruff caused by fungus, pyrithione zinc shampoos are recommended. Failing this, ketoconazole-based shampoos are available.

For seborrheic dermatitis, and/or psoriasis-caused dandruff, tar-based shampoos are available.

For dandruff caused by dry skin, selenium sulfide shampoos are generally recommended.

Each of these shampoos can be used daily or several times a week. As you begin to get your dandruff under control, you can slowly wean yourself back to two or three times per week.

