

Light Therapy for Eczema: Is it Effective?



Eczema is unsightly and irritating, but referring to it as a mere “skin condition” barely scratches the surface of how it can affect one’s everyday life.

In fact, eczema can be uncomfortable and, at times, painful. Moderate to severe instances of the disease can even disrupt sleep and affect daily activities—everything from school and sports activities, to work and intimate relationships.

These physical and psychological effects make finding relief a top priority. And while there is currently no cure for eczema, there are many treatments, including lifestyle changes, over-the-counter (OTC) remedies, prescription topical and oral treatments, injectable medications, and, perhaps most intriguing, phototherapy.

Along with examining the impact of eczema and current treatments, this article will focus on phototherapy and red light therapy as a promising, effective treatment for this troublesome and often difficult-to-treat disease.

Below, we’ll review current treatments for eczema, as well as how they compare to photo- and red light therapies--two promising and effective alternatives.

The Problem With Common Eczema Treatments

While the symptoms of eczema are plain to see, the exact cause remains mostly hidden. Medical professionals have posited the **theory** that an overactive response by the body's immune system to an irritant makes the skin break out in the symptoms of eczema, but none of the current medications, cremes, or lifestyle changes can address it with 100% effectiveness..

With this in mind, it seems clear that managing the symptoms of eczema is the best course of treatment. But not all cases are equal, and the best treatment depends greatly on type and severity. Symptoms and treatment responses often vary by individual sufferer, and it's often most effective to use several treatments together.

Some of the most common treatments include:



Lifestyle Changes

Such as warm showers followed by a moisturizing regimen.



Over-the-Counter (OTC) Products

For example, cleansers, moisturizers, anti-itch creams, and more.



Prescription Treatments

Such a skin barrier creams, immunosuppressants, and intravenous biologic drugs

Despite best efforts, however, many people still don't find consistent relief from eczema. What works for one person probably won't work for someone else, and it's not uncommon to try *all* of the common treatments without finding anything particularly effective. If this sounds like you, it's worth considering light therapy—especially red light therapy—as it has shown great promise as a safe, and effective alternative to typical treatments.

Phototherapy for Eczema: Effective, but with Drawbacks



Researchers explored the use of UVA and UVB light as a potential treatment after observing subjects who experience relief from eczema following ample sun exposure. The resulting technique, known as phototherapy, is used to treat moderate to severe eczema in adults and older children who are not responding to conventional treatment.

UVA and UVB light therapy focuses on narrowband (311nm and 313nm) phototherapy, which penetrates into the uppermost layers of the skin to reduce inflammation and itching. Typically, UVB light is used first, followed by UVA for more severe cases where the latter isn't effective. Either way, the treatment is accompanied by the use of psoralen—a topical or oral medication that absorbs UV light and improves outcomes.

Ultraviolet light therapy works because it reduces the number of white cells (T-cells) in the skin. White cells cause inflammation and contribute to the symptoms of eczema—so reducing the number is crucial, as doing so leads to less inflammation and relief from symptoms.

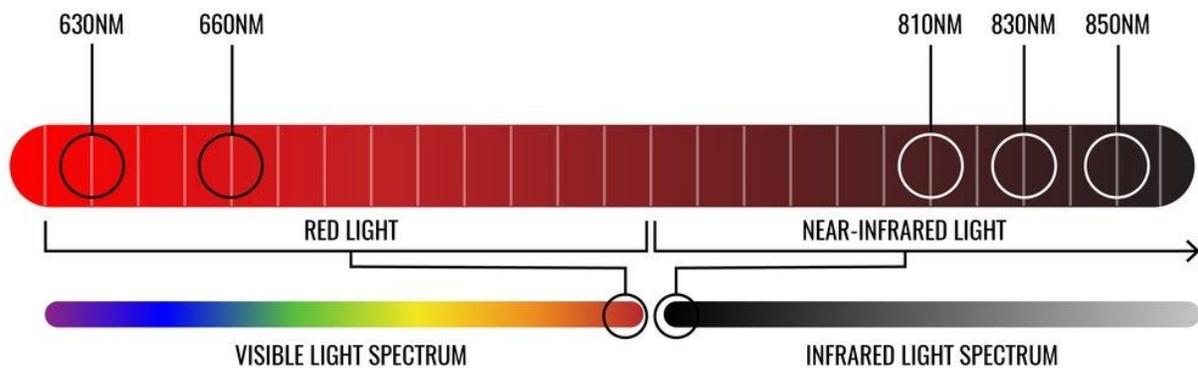
For phototherapy to truly be successful, subjects must commit to several intensive weeks of treatments, administered two to three times per week for about three months (longer in severe cases). Once the patient reports a lack of itching, the treatments are reduced and maintenance courses are often recommended to prevent recurring eczema flares.

While UVA and UVB light therapy is generally effective, some patients may experience “sunburn” after treatment, and some report nausea after taking psoralen. Also, overexposure to UVA and UVB lights causes skin cell damage, premature skin aging, and even skin cancer; and the answer to “how much is too much” depends on the individual. Finally, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) cautions against using UVA/UVB light therapy on children unless other therapies have failed, and only under close supervision.

While UVA/UVB therapy are imperfect treatments due to potential risks, red light therapy for eczema is a type of phototherapy that is seeing encouraging results in early research.

Red Light Therapy for Eczema: A Promising Alternative

WAVELENGTHS OF RED LIGHT



PLATINUM LED
THERAPY LIGHTS

Red light therapy uses relatively long wavelengths of light (630nm to 700nm) to penetrate the skin and promote healing, increase circulation, improve skin tone, and treat a number of chronic skin conditions. It is safe, painless, and delivers these results without the harmful effects of UVA and UVB light.

This therapy works because red light increases the production of adenosine triphosphate (ATP) from the cells' mitochondria, which is the energy source of all cells. With an increase in ATP, skin cells have more energy to devote to optimal cell functioning, regeneration, and healing. Red light therapy also eases eczema symptoms by:



Stimulating formation of new capillaries and increasing circulation for improved oxygen nutrient delivery to the skin;



Activating the lymphatic system, a part of the immune system that removes waste from the body; and



Stimulating DNA/RNA synthesis.

Red light also stimulates our sympathetic nervous system (the fight-or-flight response). Normally, this is not associated with healing, however, the sympathetic nervous response causes improved circulation and a decrease in inflammatory responses.

In short, improved blood flow from red light therapy can assist the skin's natural healing properties.

While UVA and UVB light therapy has some therapeutic effects on the skin's surface, they do not penetrate the skin deeply enough for **mitochondrial photostimulation** for increased ATP production, or stimulation of the lymphatic system. The red light spectrum penetrates to a truly therapeutic depth with no known side effects.

Conclusion

If you're looking for an effective way to treat the symptoms of eczema, you have a ton of options. From cremes, oral medication, to UV light therapy, you could spend weeks, months--even **years**--trying to find the best solution.

But there's one alternative that stands apart as a long-term, natural solution. A solution that moves beyond treating surface-level symptoms, to improving your body's natural functioning at the cellular level. That alternative is red light therapy.

Red light therapy is effective, painless, and relatively inexpensive, especially when compared to the alternatives. If you're ready to try it out, take a look at [our selection](#) of the most advanced, red light therapy devices today.

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