

# CLEAR AND FREE, FINALLY

by DEB SNIDER, CCH

I will not forget the first time I saw two-year-old Sadie.\* She was in a diaper, with no pants and no shirt. Her skin was bright red, with an eczema rash covering much of her belly, back, legs, and arms. It was shocking to see and looked very painful. It was especially bad behind her knees, where you could see scabs from her scratching. The poor little thing! She didn't like to wear clothing—it made her itching worse.

Thirty-five-year-old Maggie's\* eczema was also quite striking. The skin on her legs was seeping a clear fluid, and she had to wrap her legs in gauze to avoid soaking her pants. "I remember the eczema first starting when I was about four years old," she said. "All around and under the edges of my swimsuit, there'd be red, burning, inflamed skin." And for the next 31 years, Maggie continued to suffer with intense burning, itching, and weeping skin on large sections of her body.

## A deeper look

Both Sadie and Maggie were suffering greatly with an illness called eczema. Their symptoms were alike in many ways, and their conventional medical practitioners had offered them similar treatments to try to control those symptoms (e.g., topical corticosteroid creams).

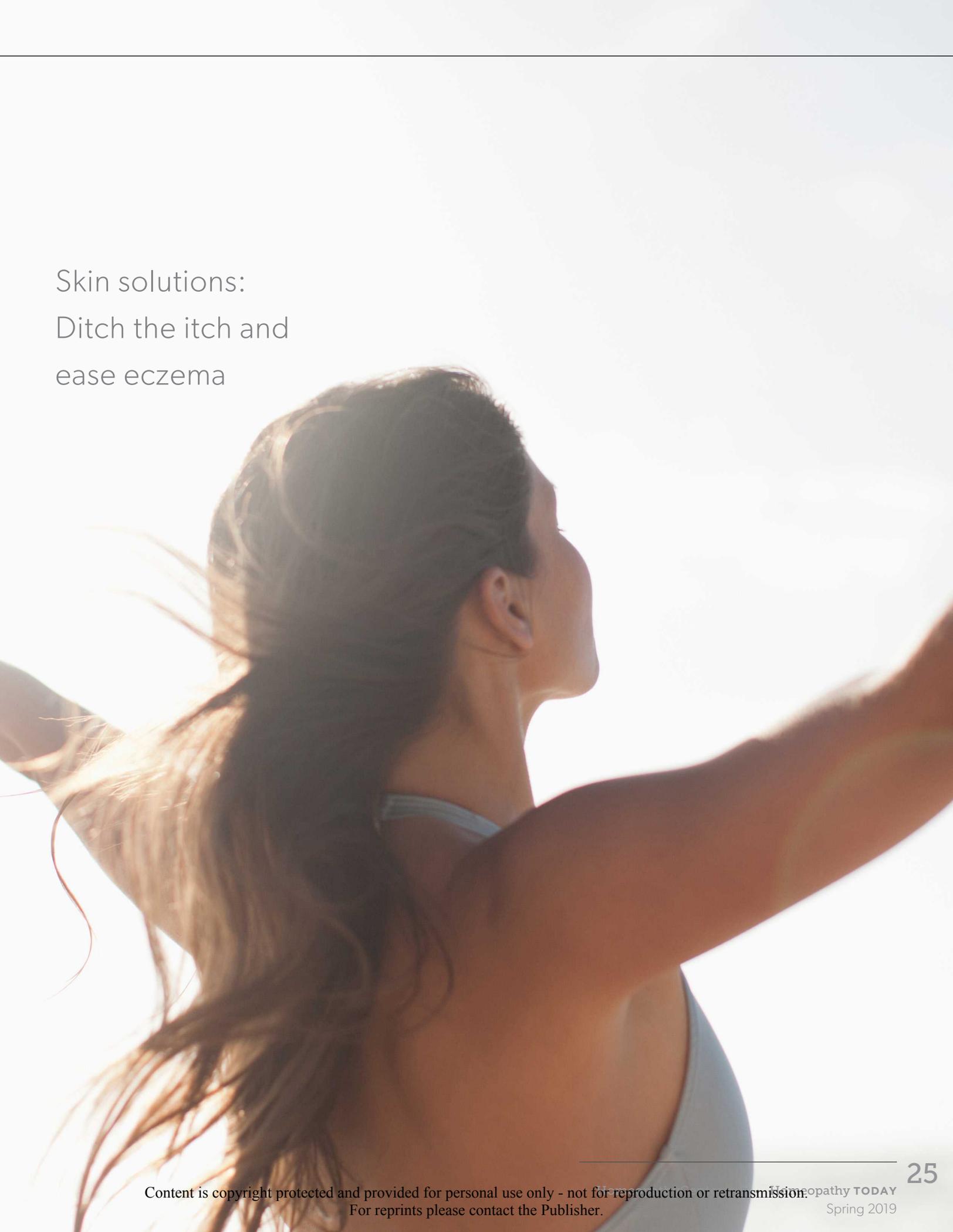
We homeopaths look deeper at an individual's symptoms, however. And when you do that with two people with the same diagnosis (e.g., eczema), you will find differences in their symptoms and in their stories. No two people experience the same illness in exactly the same way. That is why each of these individuals, Sadie and Maggie, had her own journey back to health, as you will see in their stories that follow.

The reality is, no matter what the illness is, each of us can benefit from homeopathy's tailored approach to "nudge" our inner healing mechanisms. In addition to pointing out our uniqueness, homeopathy shows us how seemingly unrelated issues are actually connected and represent an overall imbalance in health.

Homeopathy also makes it crystal clear that our bodies are not the enemies, so we don't need to "fight" against them. Even in persistent illnesses of longstanding, our bodies can often heal well, and in a relatively short time, as you'll see with both Sadie and Maggie. The truth is, the healing capacity of our bodies is amazing!

## Eczema

Eczema (or "atopic dermatitis") describes a chronic condition of red, inflamed, and itchy skin. It tends to be associated with an over-reactive immune system where the



Skin solutions:  
Ditch the itch and  
ease eczema

## Approximately 10% of the U.S. population reportedly suffers from eczema or skin allergy.

body produces inflammation in response to a trigger, such as emotional stress, soap or laundry detergent, types of fabric, cigarette smoke, food, and so on. Researchers suspect genetics may also play a role. Additional symptoms can include dry, scaly, cracked skin, as well as small bumps and, in severe cases, weeping skin. The National Eczema Association reports no known cure for eczema.

Approximately 10% of the U.S. population reportedly suffers from eczema or skin allergy. While eczema is more common in children, most often appearing before age five, it can occur at any age and can persist through adulthood. Eczema tends to flare periodically, disappearing for short or long periods of time, even years.

Diagnosis is usually based on a visual exam and a review of medical history. Once diagnosed, treatment is focused on controlling and avoiding symptoms. Steroidal creams and ointments are prescribed to control itching and promote skin repair. Oral steroids, like prednisone, may be given in more severe cases to fight inflammation. Topical or oral antibiotics may also be prescribed, since people with eczema-compromised skin are more prone to skin infections. Other treatments include skin moisturizers, light therapy, counseling, and self-relaxation methods.

### Beyond skin

Eczema can have a major impact on daily life. Nearly half of people with eczema report feeling frustrated “often” or “always” by their disease. The impact on appearance can lead to feelings of embarrassment and incidents of being bullied. Eczema’s itching or general discomfort can also disrupt sleep, which ultimately impacts overall health.

Eczema also comes with an increased risk of other health issues. In the U.S., half of the children with severe eczema develop asthma, and 75% develop allergic rhinitis (seasonal allergies). More than 20% of adults with eczema also have asthma. Children with eczema are also more likely to be diagnosed with ADHD, depression, anxiety, or autism spectrum disorder.

### Sadie’s story

Remember little Sadie, who wore only a

diaper because of the itchy, red eczema covering much of her body? I first met her in early 2014 when she was a little over two years old. She had been suffering from severe, chronic eczema since the age of six months. Her mom wanted to avoid using steroids or other prescription medications and was looking for natural solutions that could permanently resolve the eczema. Initially, Sadie’s mom had suspected diet was to blame, so she put Sadie on a gluten-free, dairy-free diet and gave her organic food whenever possible; unfortunately, this didn’t seem to help. She had tried using various creams and moisturizers, all to no avail. She had worked with an alternative practitioner who gave Sadie oral herbal tinctures, which also did not improve Sadie’s skin. Sadie’s mom was frustrated and felt like she was running out of options.

As mentioned, when I saw Sadie, her skin was bright red, inflamed, and very itchy. If she started scratching her skin, it would get even more inflamed and itchy, which would cause her to scratch even more—a vicious cycle. From time to time, this discomfort disturbed her sleep, too. Sadie’s eczema, while always present and relatively severe, did fluctuate in severity to some degree.

Sadie’s mom said she saw adults staring at her daughter when they went out. So far, Sadie hadn’t noticed, and other kids had not started making fun of her skin, but her mom worried this would happen as Sadie got older. Her mom described Sadie as a little unsure of herself, and she often looked to her mom for reassurance. When I interacted with Sadie, I found her to be a sweetheart—a little shy at first but then eager to get my attention and praise.

Little Sadie was also struggling with constipation. She would have a bowel movement only every third day. Her stool tended to be large and hard, requiring her to strain, which caused pain. Her mom said the constipation had started a month or so after the eczema began. Her mom noted that Sadie had a lot of loud, odorous gas. She also had a lot of belly rumbling, and it was common for Sadie to complain that her belly hurt.

Aside from eczema and constipation, Sadie seemed to be a normal, healthy kid with a lot of energy. There was nothing out-

## In choosing a homeopathic remedy for Sadie, the main goal was obviously to resolve her eczema.

standing about either her birth history or her mom's pregnancy. Physically, she had curly blond hair, fair skin, and thin arms and legs relative to her torso. She was smaller than average for her age. To sleep, she almost always positioned herself on her abdomen, backside up, with her knees to her chest.

### A holistic approach

In choosing a homeopathic remedy for Sadie, the main goal was obviously to resolve her eczema. Of course, I also wanted to see her constipation improve. With a well-matched remedy, I would expect both of these to happen (although maybe not in the desired order or time frame, because the body has its own priority system, which doesn't always match our own).

Ideally, I wanted to find a remedy that matched Sadie's redness and itchiness in the folds of her skin, made worse from scratching—as well as her constipation with large, hard stools that caused pain and straining. I also hoped to find a remedy associated with children, a lack of confidence, and a knee-to-chest sleep position.

### A good match

I ultimately chose *Lycopodium clavatum*, a remedy with a marked affinity for digestive disturbances. I have often seen a strong connection between digestive issues and skin issues, and I believed Sadie's digestive system (constipation, abdominal pain, rumbling, gas) was potentially at the root of her skin issues. People needing *Lycopodium* are also well-known for lacking self-confidence while seeking the attention and praise of others. In *Desktop Guide to Keynotes and Confirmatory Symptoms*, Morrison notes that children needing *Lycopodium* can be very shy, with a sense of inferiority. The gastro-intestinal tract is most affected, with loud, abdominal rumbling as well as distention and bloating. In *Materia Medica of Homeopathic Medicines*, Phatak points out that those needing *Lycopodium*

may have weakness of digestion as well as eczema associated with gastric disorders. He also mentions skin dryness and rawness, specifically in the folds of the skin. Additionally, *Lycopodium* covered Sadie's knee-to-chest sleep position and is a remedy routinely helpful in children.

### Dosing carefully

Eczema is naturally volatile, and the condition of the skin can fluctuate, even daily, between clear and severely inflamed—and everything in between. For this reason, I approach dosing in these cases with some caution, aiming to minimize flare-ups. For Sadie, I had her take two drops orally of *Lycopodium* 30c from a liquid dropper bottle. I told her mom we'd wait and see how Sadie responded to this first dose.

I also provided her with some pellets of *Lycopodium* 6c, not to take orally but rather to put in bath water in the event Sadie's skin flared up. Using a lower potency of the same remedy to address an aggravation or flare-up of symptoms is a suggestion I learned from a teacher. As I understand the rationale, when a person appears to be responding well to a dose of a higher

potency remedy but then struggles with a flare-up or aggravation, a dose of the same remedy in a lower potency can provide an additional, lighter nudge to help the body push through the aggravation or flare-up. (Putting that low potency remedy in water and thereby using it topically is another way to lighten the nudge.)

### First worse, then better

Initially, I was in contact with Sadie's mom frequently, as I find that people with severe skin conditions require more frequent communication than people with most other conditions. After Sadie took her first dose of *Lycopodium* 30c, her skin got worse, but her mom put her in bath water with a pellet of *Lycopodium* 6c, which helped to calm her skin. Sadie seemed to improve for a few weeks after that, but when her progress stalled, I had her take another dose from the *Lycopodium* 30c dropper bottle.

At the first follow-up appointment, about a month later, I was pleasantly surprised to see Sadie's skin much clearer. In many areas where the skin had previously been red and inflamed, it was now white and somewhat resembled a scar. Her mom was glad her daughter's skin was so much better but worried that the "scars" would not fully heal. I told her that I'd seen this in other, similar skin cases, and, over time, the skin returned to its normal color, leaving no mark.



## Maggie had struggled with eczema her entire life, and the intensity tended to fluctuate.

Sadie's digestive troubles were also improving. She was now having a bowel movement two out of every three days, instead of one out of three as before. And her stools were not large and hard anymore, they were smaller and soft. Consequently, she had less straining. Her gas was less frequent and not as loud. She was also complaining much less about her belly hurting, and her mom did not remember hearing any belly rumbling.

Her mom also noted that Sadie had new hair growing at the base of her head, where previously it had been mostly bald. Finally, her mom felt Sadie had been less clingy since starting homeopathic treatment.

Clearly, Sadie was improving on all levels and responding well to *Lycopodium*. I suggested we continue to keep in frequent touch to determine if and when Sadie might benefit from another dose of *Lycopodium* (i.e., if her progress stalled).

### Clear sailing

Over the next month, Sadie got a dose of *Lycopodium* 30c approximately once a week. When I saw her at the end of the month, Sadie's skin was completely clear! There was no redness, and the white "scars" were gone. Even I was surprised how quickly her skin had cleared up. The only sign of eczema was some itching on her arms, but the skin looked normal. Sadie was also having normal daily bowel movements and no issues with gas, pain, or abdominal rumbling. After this second visit, Sadie's mom did not bring her daughter back for additional treatment.

Because eczema is a skin condition that fluctuates, you might wonder whether

Sadie's clear skin was unrelated to homeopathic treatment and just a "normal" fluctuation. Well, it seems highly unlikely. In the previous 18 months that Sadie had suffered with eczema, she never experienced such clear skin as after taking *Lycopodium*. In addition, Sadie's digestion and temperament had improved after homeopathic treatment.

And, saving the best for last: it is now nearly five years since I first saw Sadie. I have been in touch with her mom, who happily reports that Sadie is doing well and that her skin has remained clear.

### Eczema, asthma, hay fever

The Mayo Clinic reports that half of young children with eczema develop asthma and hay fever by their teens. In my experience, there may be more to the story ... With my clients, I see a pattern of children with eczema who are treated with steroids; their skin symptoms are suppressed by the drugs and the skin clears up; it is *after* the suppression of skin symptoms that the child develops asthma.

After such a child is successfully treated with homeopathy to resolve the asthma, I often see a temporary recurrence of the eczema. With adults who previously had both eczema and asthma, I have seen a temporary return of both symptoms. What to conclude here is not clear. However, this could be explained by homeopath Constantine Hering's "Law of Cure," which states that the body heals from the inside out, from the head down, and from newest to oldest symptoms, as they have appeared or as they have been suppressed.

### Maggie's story

While eczema occurs most often in children, it can also impact adults and be quite severe, as in Maggie's case. Remember how she had to wrap her legs with gauze to catch the fluid oozing from her eczema? She also experienced intense burning, which was worse when her skin was wet, when she scratched it, and when she sweat. She said it felt like "something was under the skin, as if it was moving," and she had constant itching.

Maggie had struggled with eczema her entire life, and the intensity tended to

fluctuate. Recently, however, the eczema had been especially severe and constant. She had never been able to see a connection with the foods she ate, although she craved and drank a lot of milk. "Probably too much milk," she said.

Maggie had used prescription steroid creams on her skin in the past, with mixed results, and had decided long ago not to use them anymore. She had become concerned about the possibility of side effects (thinning skin, high blood pressure, and more). "It's a Band-aid not a solution, and I don't want to have to use them forever," she said. On occasion, she took Benadryl to calm the itching, but otherwise, nothing gave her much relief.

### Deeper issues

Maggie also struggled with depression, and it soon became apparent to me that she was carrying a lot of hurt related to her father. Throughout her life, she felt abandoned and unloved by him. As a teenager, she had asked to live with her father and stepmother, but they told her no. She felt rejected and told herself she needed to be strong and deal with life herself. As a result, she developed as a leader in high school and seemed to be excelling. The sadness persisted, however, and as a young adult, she had turned to alcohol to ease her pain. She berated herself about her choices and felt like a failure. Recently, she felt so much sadness that she had started to isolate herself and not participate in social activities with friends and family.

When asked to describe herself, Maggie said, "I'm like a clown. I make people laugh and want everyone to be happy. I like to see smiles on faces." She put on a happy face so others didn't have to see or feel her sadness.

### Remedy revealed

As she told me this, the remedy *Natrum carbonicum* popped into my mind because it fit her emotional state. But I set that thought aside while I performed my typical analysis, repertorizing her skin symptoms—itching, burning, seeping, and the feeling that something was moving under the skin. For this last symptom, I used the repertory rubric "formication," which means a crawling sensation. While

“fornication” wasn’t an exact match for what Maggie was feeling, it was the closest rubric I could find. I was pleasantly surprised that the remedy that had popped into my head because of her emotional state, *Natrum carbonicum*, also matched her skin symptoms.

In *The Soul of Remedies*, Sankaran writes that people needing *Natrum carbonicum* feel like outcasts, unworthy of love or a relationship. In particular, they may have a history of feeling neglected by their father. As a result, sadness ensues, and they withdraw. They become estranged from family and friends and bear their grief silently, feeling forsaken. At the same time, they can present an overly cheerful demeanor to the world. They are sensitive to others and often have a gentle, yielding presence. I have always associated *Natrum carbonicum* with the song “Tears of a Clown” by Smokey Robinson, and it was that song that instantly popped into my head when Maggie described herself in this manner.

*Natrum carbonicum* is not necessarily a top remedy in eczema cases, so at first I was a little unsure about choosing it. Also, people needing this remedy tend to feel worse in the sun and to dislike milk, neither of which was true for Maggie. Even so, my analysis of her overall physical and emotional symptoms suggested it was a good choice.

I had Maggie take a single, oral, liquid dose of *Natrum carbonicum* 30c. Because her itching and burning were so intense, I suggested she place the inside of a banana peel on her irritated skin, as this can sometimes soothe skin pain (which it did). I also gave her some pellets of *Natrum carbonicum* 6c to put in water and sponge on her skin, in the event that the itching and burning became intolerable.

### Changes for the better

When we followed up one month later, Maggie had taken only that first dose of *Natrum carbonicum* 30c. She reported the skin on her arms was now 80% better. Her legs were still somewhat red, but the weeping had stopped. Maggie’s healing skin was white in color and looked “tough” to her, much like Sadie’s skin had looked early on.

## Maggie’s healing skin was white in color and looked “tough” to her, much like Sadie’s skin had looked early on.

Overall, however, she said she felt a little better and not quite as sad. In addition, she remarked that her nails had grown very quickly over the previous month—which I interpreted as a sign that her body was working on healing as a whole!

Interestingly, Maggie reported that she’d had one flare-up following a visit to her dad’s home. It was not a pleasant visit, and she was unsure if she would return. She’d sponged her skin with *Natrum carbonicum* 6c in water, which alleviated the eczema flare-up.

At this point, I asked Maggie to hold off on taking any additional *Natrum carbonicum* 30c. The job of the homeopathic remedy is to trigger the person’s inner healing mechanisms, which had clearly happened. For now, it was time to wait. (I suggested she could continue to use *Natrum carbonicum* 6c topically, if needed, however.)

At our next visit, one month later, Maggie was still having itching, but her skin looked 90% better. During the previous 30 days, she had used *Natrum carbonicum* 6c topically a couple times and had taken one dose of *Natrum carbonicum* 30c at my suggestion when her progress stalled. “I feel so much better overall now,” she reported. She felt positive for the first time in a very long time. She had ended a relationship with a long-term boyfriend and moved out. “I realized we both knew it was over for a while now, but I finally had the strength to move on,” she said. She had been having good discussions with her dad and was feeling much better about their relationship. She had also started engaging more with friends and family. She noted that she was no longer craving milk and had greatly reduced her intake. At the end of the session, she told me, “I feel 100 times better than when we started two months ago!”

It’s been three years since I last saw Maggie. I reached out to her recently to see how she was doing. “My skin has been very clear,” she said. But that’s not all. She is doing well overall and has recently looked into studying homeopathy!

### Lessons learned

Again and again, I have witnessed the power of homeopathy. The National Eczema Association says there is no known cure for eczema, but Maggie and Sadie might say otherwise.

Given the nature of a skin condition such as eczema, which often flares up and causes intense itching and pain, some homeopaths avoid these cases altogether. It’s true that healing a skin condition can require extra patience and determination, for both the client and the homeopath. I have learned, however, that if my client is willing to work through the ups and downs, healing is possible and worth the extra effort.

\* *Not their real names.*

### REFERENCES

- 1 American Academy of Dermatology Association. *Eczema/ Dermatitis*. <https://www.aad.org/public/diseases/eczema>
- 2 Last, W. (2011) *Hering’s Law of Cure*. [http://www.motion-health.nl/bestanden/Herings\\_law\\_of\\_Cure\\_2011.pdf](http://www.motion-health.nl/bestanden/Herings_law_of_Cure_2011.pdf)
- 3 Mayo Clinic. *Atopic Dermatitis*. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/atopic-dermatitis-eczema/symptoms-causes/syc-20353273>
- 4 National Eczema Association. *Eczema Facts*. <https://nationaleczema.org/research/eczema-facts/>
- 5 U.S. Centers For Disease Control and Prevention. (2014) *Table – Eczema Skin Problems*. [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/health\\_policy/eczema\\_skin\\_problems\\_tables.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/health_policy/eczema_skin_problems_tables.pdf)

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Deb Snider, CCH, is a certified homeopath in Ketchum, ID. She studied homeopathy at the American Medical College of Homeopathy in Phoenix, AZ. She loves working with children and adults, both locally and remotely, with a special focus on children with hyperactivity and behavioral issues, and women with autoimmune disease. She is also a certified Metabolic Balance coach, providing individualized nutrition plans. In her spare time, she enjoys hiking and skiing in the mountains. Contact her at: 208-471-8530 or [www.homeopathyforyousv.com](http://www.homeopathyforyousv.com).