



## *Information for You from Your Health Care Team*

### **Contact Nickel Dermatitis**

**What is Contact Nickel Dermatitis?** This is a rash that starts when the skin touches certain types of metal, mainly nickel. It is caused by an allergy to the metal. Nickel is found in belt buckles, snaps on pants, eyeglass frames and inexpensive jewelry. It is important to remember that you will not be allergic to every kind of metal.

**What does the rash look like?** The rash usually starts just below the belly button with a red, bumpy rash that is very itchy. Shortly after, a bumpy, itchy rash may show up on the elbows or knees. If you have been wearing earrings or necklaces, the rash will also appear on the ears, neck or shoulders. This rash is often mistaken for eczema, which looks similar, is also very itchy and may be seen in the same spots.

**How is it treated?** Since contact nickel dermatitis is caused by an allergy to nickel, the most important part of treatment is to stop exposing your skin to the nickel. Stop wearing belts with large buckles that will touch your skin, sew a patch over the back of the snap on your pants, wear pants with elastic wastes or plastic buttons. Some people will apply nail polish over the back of pant snaps, but you must remember to reapply it after washing the pants. Do not wear cheap jewelry or watches that may leave a mark on your skin. Your doctor will give you a medicated cream to control the itching and smooth out your skin. It is also important not to scratch, as this will continue to make it worse.

**Today your doctor recommends:** \_\_\_\_\_

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