

Patricia Cervini's Story

Patient

"I grew up in a military family where we were taught to soldier on, so I built up what I have come to think of as my eczema body armor. Feeling so sick with what others think is just a skin rash is miserable. That's why I sought out other people living with eczema. Because when we help each other, everyone feels less alone."

– Patricia Cervini, Patient

National Eczema Association Ambassador Patricia Cervini has been dealing with eczema on and off since she was a toddler. After going years without a flare during her childhood and teens, she thought it was under control. However, in her 20's, Patricia began experiencing recurrences which came and went throughout the next three decades, causing painful, infected rashes up and down her legs and on her face. At times, the itching was so severe that she would go weeks without rest, spending long, sleepless nights scratching herself so much and so deeply that, by morning, her bedsheets were covered in blood. Patricia spent years trying treatments, from topical creams to prescription corticosteroids to phototherapy, to manage her symptoms and deal with the open sores and infections they caused. Some worked for a time and stopped; others caused reactions so bad they were more agonizing than the eczema itself.

Patricia often felt exhausted and alone. She missed work to visit doctors or tend to her skin, skipped social activities to avoid embarrassment, and spent hours battling her insurance company about coverage for new treatments or home equipment when covered treatments were ineffective. Finally, in her 50s after endless rounds of topical steroids that proved to be ineffective, Patricia found a dermatologist she felt listened to and believed her concerns. She has since started on an injected biologic drug that helps control her flares and together with phototherapy and dietary protocols, is currently keeping her symptoms mild and manageable.