

The underlying meaning of acne



Written by: Dr Cheung Kit

I remember watching a terrifying TV show during my college days. It was about how a virus similar to Ebola spread among residents and outsiders in a certain area, leading to everyone's death. In the drama, people infected with the virus would inevitably develop red rashes on their bodies even in the early stages. Therefore, many people have a deep impression that rashes represent serious diseases.

In fact, this is only half true. A rash is a symptom that can be a skin problem or a reaction to a systemic disease. Skin diseases can be simple skin sensitivities, mosquito bites, shingles, sunburns, etc. Systemic reactions can be due to drug sensitivities, infections, autoimmune disorders, etc. The previous statement "half true" means that among systemic reactions, some are more severe, while others are milder.

Severe examples include:

1. Drug Sensitivity: Since a rash is only a sign, the reaction can be very severe. Therefore, if this is the case, we generally handle and observe with extra caution.
2. Infectious (Acute): For example, measles, chickenpox, hand, foot, and mouth disease, German measles, mumps, etc. These diseases are highly contagious and also present with fever

symptoms. So, in addition to worrying about the complications of the disease, we also worry about it spreading to others. Therefore, special care is needed.

3. Autoimmune Diseases: For example, lupus erythematosus, allergic purpura, etc. Since these conditions can have more systemic complications, the treatment goal is not to treat the rash but to address the underlying disease.



So what are the "other half" of rashes that are not serious?

1. Roseola: This is a type of rash 'exclusive' to young children. It is definitely a reaction after being infected with a certain filtrable virus. Whenever this rash appears, the fever has already completely subsided, which also indicates that the condition has stabilized. Generally, these rashes appear on the torso and then spread to the limbs and face. Since they are not itchy or painful, there is no need for special treatment.

2. Heat Rash (Prickly Heat): This is the result of blocked sweat glands. It is mostly caused by the environment being too hot or wearing too many clothes. Although there may be a little itching, it is not as uncomfortable as eczema, so it is not a serious problem. On the other hand, as long as the temperature of the affected area is lowered, the condition will improve.

Infant Eczema

3. Although infant eczema can be very itchy, it is time-limited. It generally starts from one month after birth and lasts until about six months. Moreover, it responds well to medication (such as

medium-strength steroid creams). So, basically, as long as parents are willing to deal with it positively and follow the doctor's treatment, there will be a good response.

Therefore, having a rash does not necessarily mean there is a big problem. However, if a rash occurs at the same time as fever, systemic symptoms, or poor mental state, it means it would be better to see a doctor sooner rather than later.