

**ATTENTION NEWS/HEALTH EDITORS:**

**Education is key to taking control of eczema  
February is Eczema Awareness Month**



**Toronto, February 6, 2008** - The cold, dark days of winter can be gloomy for many people; but for eczema sufferers, it can be downright painful. Chilly, dry air, as well as indoor heating, can dehydrate the skin and cause flare-ups of this chronic, and often misunderstood, skin disorder. February is Eczema Awareness Month. The Eczema Awareness Month campaign will shed light on eczema, empowering Canadians who may be in the dark about coping with this common, life-altering condition that affects more than two million Canadians.

Designated by the Eczema Awareness, Support and Education (EASE<sup>®</sup>) Program - Canada's most comprehensive eczema resource available on the web - in 2003, Eczema Awareness Month serves as an opportunity to focus national attention on eczema (also called atopic dermatitis). The condition causes inflammation deep in the skin and symptoms include dry, itchy skin and a painful red, raw-looking rash. Each individual's eczema can be triggered by unique environmental factors, which may appear when the body reacts to environmental elements that would normally be harmless.

It is widely believed that individuals who are knowledgeable about their medical condition will have better results when managing their health and well-being. Understanding the disease and what triggers an individual's eczema, as well as making certain lifestyle changes, can help alleviate the discomfort and frustration associated with eczema. While there is no cure, effective therapies exist to help manage eczema.

Thousands of eczema sufferers, their parents, family members and friends have already turned to the EASE Program to learn about the latest treatment options, obtain advice about managing the condition and tips on talking with others about eczema. The EASE Program's wide range of educational material includes:



[www.eczemaCanada.ca](http://www.eczemaCanada.ca) - the most comprehensive Canadian-based eczema resource available on the web, this newly-redesigned, interactive website offers patient information and helpful tips on managing eczema, as well as access to past editions of The Eczaminer, EASE Program brochures and other educational material, that can all be downloaded free of charge.

**Eczema: It's time to take control** - a comprehensive booklet filled with facts about eczema, various treatment options and information about the EASE Program. Now available in English, French, Mandarin, Punjabi and Vietnamese!



**Helping you take control of your eczema** - a brochure filled with facts about the signs and symptoms of eczema, as well as a self-test and information about the EASE Program.

**But it itches so much!** - a brochure intended for parents of children with eczema, with tips on managing childhood eczema at home and at school.

**The Eczaminer** - a seasonal newsletter that highlights current eczema-related news and tips.

## Press Release

**Penny's World** - a fun, child-friendly website that aims to help children understand eczema, Penny's World features interactive learning activities and games, as well as a free colourful storybook, Penny's EGGS-im-ah, which can be downloaded at [www.pennysworld.ca](http://www.pennysworld.ca).

Since its inception in 2002, the EASE Program has been recognized by experts in the field of dermatology as the source for credible, medically-reviewed information and educational support on eczema for Canadians. In fact, the EASE Program recently earned accolades when it received its fourth Canadian Dermatology Association (CDA) Public Education Award. The award is granted annually by the CDA for excellence in furthering the understanding of dermatologic issues and encouraging healthy behaviour in the medical, surgical and cosmetic care of skin, hair and nails.

"This Eczema Awareness Month, we hope to encourage Canadians to educate themselves about eczema," says Dr. Ronald Vender, a Hamilton-based dermatologist and Director of Dermaterials Research. "While eczema can have a profound impact on individuals and families, people who have the information and support they need tend to feel less isolated and misunderstood. The EASE Program offers valuable advice and information about everything from daily skincare to managing eczema in the winter and aims to empower people to help control their condition."

For more information about eczema or the EASE Program, visit [www.eczemaCanada.ca](http://www.eczemaCanada.ca).

### **About the Eczema Awareness, Support and Education (EASE<sup>®</sup>) Program**

The Eczema Awareness, Support and Education (EASE) Program is a national and fully bilingual patient education program developed with the assistance of leading Canadian dermatologists to provide access to useful and accurate information about eczema. Supported through an educational grant from Astellas Pharma Canada, Inc., the EASE Program has been recognized with four Public Education Awards from the Canadian Dermatology Association (2003, 2004, 2005, 2007).

For more information, high-resolution photos or to arrange an interview with Dr. Vender, please contact:

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