

# National Eczema Association



*"I've been familiar with NEA for a number of years but was in denial that the disease impacted my life in a significant way until I had a few years to reflect back on my childhood." Dinesh Shenoy*

## My Long Journey with Eczema Dinesh Shenoy, Board of Directors

My long journey with eczema has led me to be a major volunteer with the National Eczema Association, and I hope you will join me as part of the NEA family, helping to support people with eczema through research, education and awareness.

I have struggled with eczema for the last thirty years (since I was an infant), yet I still find the disease difficult to characterize and explain to myself, let alone others, including friends and loved ones. As a child, I saw eczema as a normal part of life, as natural as having black hair or brown eyes. I went from flare-up to flare-up, resigned to the accompanying itching and bleeding. Yes, there were times where I felt less energetic or didn't want to roll out of bed in the morning, but I thought that was simply part of being a teenager; I didn't realize the full role the disease played in my life. The challenge with eczema is not the bleeding and discomfort (as frustrating as these things may be); it's the effect these symptoms have on a child's outlook and ambition—and their response to even the simplest tasks and activities. I didn't understand until age 25 that showers could be pleasant or a workout energizing!

I have to credit my family for their relentless pursuit of a cure—often to my frustration. They knew what I was going through even when I didn't. So they tailored family vacations to sneak in visits to dermatologists in Portland or Toledo, and they petitioned for me to join a pediatric clinical trial even though I was overage. Their persistence was admirable even if annoying in the eyes of a child.

I had been familiar with NEA for a number of years but was in denial that the disease impacted my life in a significant way until I had a few years to reflect back on my childhood. A key breakthrough for me was understanding what it felt like to be healthy. After all, how was I to treat the problem when I couldn't even identify it? When I have flares today, I understand that they are not normal and I act aggressively to keep them at bay.

Educating patients, parents, and family members as well as the community about eczema can have a revolutionary effect, and that is exactly what NEA does; it provides the resources and information that lead to change. So it is my pleasure to support this effort.

NEA also provides a strong network of support, connecting people with eczema with others who understand exactly what they are going through. I had the luxury of having a very caring community—parents, relatives and physicians—who were extremely supportive of me, and I know that many others do too. But advice and support from others with this disease is invaluable.

Please join with me to support NEA as it works with patients, doctors, and the community to keep this disease from dampening our spirits, creativity, and ambitions.

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