

OVER 12 YEARS I HAD SPENT THOUSANDS ON CREAMS AND MEDICINES, BUT A SIMPLE FOOD ALLERGY TEST WAS THE ONLY...

**SECOND SKIN:** She's a new woman now, but Siobhan couldn't hold her children Ellen (4) and two-and-a-half-year-old Sean (right) because her skin would crack and bleed.



★ ECZEMA is a very common skin disorder. It is characterised by itchiness (pruritus), redness (erythema), and tiny blisters (vesiculation) that appear in patches and plaques on the skin surface. The severity of eczema can vary widely. In severe cases, the skin may crack, weep and bleed and may become infected.

Long-standing eczema is often dry and causes thick scaling of the skin (lichenification). Eczema is not contagious; you can not contract eczema by touching someone who has it.

# CURE FOR MY ECZEMA

**F**OR most people, eczema simply means dry, irritable and itchy skin. It's a condition that is often unsightly and uncomfortable but, for the most part, easily remedied. However, for 35-year-old Siobhan Doyle, the chronic skin disorder had a far deeper on her health and well-being.

Blighted by the condition for 12 years, Siobhan, from Athboy Co. Meath, became debilitated by the disease as even lifting her infant children in her arms became a struggle because of her cracked and bleeding skin.

Despondent from a lack of answers and thousands of euro spent on consultation fees and medicines, no one could have imagined that a simple food allergy was behind Siobhan's devastating skin disorder.

Speaking to *SWM* this week, the mum-of-two – who first

How years of suffering ended in weeks for mum Siobhan Doyle



Denise **SMITH**

began to suffer from eczema in her early 20s – tells how it wasn't until she gave birth that eczema truly began to ravage her body.

"After I had my kids the eczema flared up intensely. It covered my body, and it wasn't just dry, itchy patches – it was nasty bleeding and cracked skin," she explains.

"It spread to my hands, arms, legs, tummy and my shoulders. It drained me emotionally because I was constantly in so much pain, I couldn't even sleep."

The pain was so excruciating that Siobhan says she struggled to cope with the everyday tasks of motherhood: "When the kids were babies I was at home on my own minding them so I found it hard to do simple things like dressing and bathing them, making bottles and picking them up. Even bending my hands made them bleed."

Siobhan's confidence also suffered a blow.

"I couldn't wear short-sleeved tops in the summer, or dresses that showed off my arms, so shopping became a nightmare," says the former pharmaceutical worker, now full-time mum.

"At one stage, my hands and arms were so bad they looked like they'd been scalded, so I'd hide them underneath long-sleeve tops."

But despite her attempts to camouflage her condition,

there was no escaping the fact that Siobhan's skin was savagely scarred by eczema.

"I remember going into the garage one day to pay for diesel and the guy just looked at my hands with shock and asked: 'did you scald them?' I just nodded because I was too embarrassed to say anything else," she says.

In her desperate bid to find a cure, Siobhan spent thousands of euro. It was wasted money.

"I spent a ridiculous amount of money going to consultants and

doctors, and on creams and medicines," she says. "I changed my make-up and fabric conditioner and even went down the route of acupuncture and herbalists, but nothing seemed to work."

Siobhan became increasingly tired and frustrated.

"The doctors could never tell me what was causing the eczema. All they did was fill me out prescription after prescription, but my skin had become so immune to the creams and tablets that they simply stopped working," she says.

Finally, Siobhan found herself contacting York Test, a leading food intolerance and allergy testing company.

"I felt myself that the eczema had something to do with the foods I was eating, so I looked up the golden pages for allergy tests and found York Test. At first, I hesitated because I thought it was going to be

another waste of money, but it was the best thing I ever did."

"They sent me out a pin-prick blood sample kit to test for food allergies and all I had to do was prick my finger and send them off a sample of my blood. I got the results back really quickly, with a list of foods that I had to give up. Within three or four days of not eating those foods I could see my skin healing. It was incredible."

After suffering for 12 painful years, within weeks of learning what foods she was allergic to, Siobhan began to look and feel like a different person.

"You would never know in a million years that my skin was once destroyed by eczema," she says, clearly delighted at the turnaround in her life.

"It truly is amazing. I can honestly say that my life has changed completely." ●

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