



Atopic Dermatitis (ECZEMA)

Atopic dermatitis, also called eczema, is a common skin problem. There is no cure for eczema. Good skin care and medicines can help control the problem.

As children get older, eczema tends to get better or may go away.

Daily Skin Care

1. **Moisturize the skin.** Eczema causes dry skin, itching, and scratching. This can be worse during the winter when the heat is on. To keep the skin in good condition, put on a moisturizer once or twice a day. One time to put on the moisturizer is right after a bath or shower. If you are also using a steroid medicine, put it on before the moisturizer.
2. **Ointments, unfragranced creams or lotions should be applied at least once a day to the entire body.** Ointments may work better than lotions.
3. **Use a mild unscented soap or non-soap cleanser.**
4. **Don't take too many baths.** Bathing or showering too much (more than once a day) can dry the skin. Children may bathe once a day if needed. Remember to put on a moisturizer right after the bath. Lukewarm water is most gentle for the skin.
5. **Wear cotton clothing next to the skin.** Wool or synthetic fabrics may cause itching. As much as possible, have children wear cotton clothing next to the skin.

Other Things That May Help

- **Use a vaporizer or room humidifier.** When the heat is on, try using a vaporizer or humidifier in your child's bedroom at night. Remember to clean the vaporizer regularly.
- **Consider using a mild laundry detergent.** Some laundry detergents contain chemicals or additives that can irritate the skin. Try using an additive-free product.
- **Consider changing or eliminating your fabric softener.** Some children with eczema are sensitive to the chemicals used in dryer sheet fabric softeners. Try using no fabric softener or one you put in with the wash.

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Pediatric Dermatology: Skin Essentials

Atopic Dermatitis Parent Handout

PediaLink resource page

Treating a Flare-Up

At times, eczema will flare-up, often for no known reason. Your child will have more itching and red, rough patches of skin. During flare-ups, other medicines are used.

Steroids

Steroid medicines are put on the skin as a thin coat to help. They may be used alone or with other medicines. **Once the skin looks normal, stop the steroid.**

FOR THE FACE: Apply _____
every morning, at bedtime, twice a day, if needed.

FOR THE BODY: Apply _____
every morning, at bedtime, twice a day, if needed.

Nonsteroid medicine

A medicine that is not a steroid may be used. It may be used alone or with a steroid.

FOR THE FACE: Apply _____
every morning, at bedtime, twice a day, if needed.

FOR THE BODY: Apply _____
every morning, at bedtime, twice a day, if needed.

Antihistamine

To help itching, we may use an antihistamine.

Your child's antihistamine is: _____.

Give _____ at bedtime.

If your child has itching during the day, you may give a dose at _____.

Antibiotic

Sometimes children with eczema can get a skin infection. If your child needs an antibiotic, we will talk with you about it.

Remember

If you have any questions, please call us.

