

ECZEMA

Also known as atopic dermatitis, eczema often is termed "the itch that rashes" starting out as dry skin that itches so we scratch it and then the red rash appears creating a cycle of itch-scratch-rash-itch-scratch-rash.

Common Triggers for eczema include

- Cold, dry air
- Sweating
- Prolonged water exposure
- Many botanical and fragrance-containing products that are marketed as eczema treatment
- Rough or scratchy clothing like wool
- Some foods

Prevention is aimed at keeping skin hydrated

- Bathe/shower using hypoallergenic, fragrance-free, dye-free body washes
- Bathe every other day and limit bath time. Use lukewarm water as hot water can be irritating
- Pat dry with cotton towel rather than rub
- Drink water!
- Apply moisturizer after bath while skin is still damp

Moisturizers

There are many products on the market for skin moisturization - it can be confusing to choose which one is best for your child with eczema.

Some key tips:

- **Ointments** are the best for moisturizing super dry skin - although a drawback is the greasy feeling it leaves. We recommend applying to the "hot spots" rather than the entire body. (Vaseline)
- **Creams** are the next best and better tolerated than ointments and can be applied all over the body. Typically, they come in a jar. Creams are often better tolerated in the summer months more so than ointments (CereVe, Cetaphil (typically comes in a jar))
- **Lotions** are the least effect at keeping skin hydrated although they are the easiest to apply. If you use a lotion, be aware frequent applications will be necessary to keep skin moisturized. (Cetaphil, Aveeno)
- Avoid products containing fragrance and botanicals as these can sometimes be irritating to skin
- A list of products approved by The National Eczema Association is available on their website

Treatment - is aimed at calming the inflamed rashy skin by using a topically applied steroid cream or ointment.

- Steroid creams come in varying strengths and thus have varying side effects. A good rule of thumb is to apply the smallest amount possible, rub in thoroughly and do not use for more than 14 days in a row (unless directed by your provider)
- Hydrocortisone 1% cream is a safe and effective over-the-counter product
- Your provider may prescribe a stronger steroid cream depending on the severity of your child's eczema

Good and reputable resources include:

National Eczema Association www.nationaleczema.org
American Academy of Dermatology <https://www.aad.org/public/diseases/eczema>
Dermatitis Academy www.dermatitisacademy.com