

Caring for your child's eczema

Eczema, also called atopic dermatitis, is a very common skin condition in children that usually starts in the first few months of life. It cannot be cured but can be very effectively managed. Most children grow out of their eczema.

To help keep your child's eczema under control, it is important to avoid aggravating factors as much as possible. Avoidable aggravating factors include:



over heating



bubble bath



prickly materials



grass, sand



over chlorinated pools

Daily skin care management

It is important to keep skin which is prone to eczema well hydrated with regular moisturising even when there is no eczema seen on the skin. Follow these steps every day to manage your child's eczema:

Bathing

1 

Bath or shower once a day (ensure the water is lukewarm). Use bath oil in your child's bath or a soap free wash in the shower.

2 

Avoid soap products as these will dry the skin. Avoid bubble baths.

3 

Keep it short

Try and keep baths and showers under five minutes.

Moisturising

- Moisturise at least once a day, more often if the skin is dry.
- It is important to moisturise your child's whole body within two minutes of getting out of the bath or shower.
- Ointments and thick moisturisers are better than lotions as they are more hydrating and are less likely to sting.
- Moisturisers can be applied to the wet body after a bath or shower then pat dry. This can reduce the sensation of greasiness.
- Always remove moisturisers from the tub with a clean spoon or spatula and apply liberally to the whole body and face.



How to treat active eczema

If you notice eczema on your child's skin, follow these instructions:

- Immediately apply cortisone ointment to red, itchy areas as prescribed by your child's doctor. Ensure you apply the ointment to all inflamed areas, not just the worst. Ointments are more moisturising and will cause less stinging than cortisone creams.
- Apply moisturiser everywhere else on the face and body at least once a day.
- Continue to apply the cortisone ointment to affected areas until there is no eczema visible and no rough areas on the skin.

How to control the itch

- Do not over heat or over wrap your child; this can make the itch worse.
- Antihistamines will not help with the itch caused by eczema and are not usually recommended. Sometimes they can be given to improve your child's sleep at night but it is better to treat the eczema properly.
- Wet wraps and cool compresses can help ease the itch caused by eczema.

Cool compresses

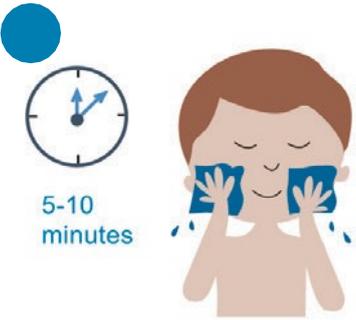
Cool compresses are a wet dressing for the face. Cool compressing should be done as often as needed until the itch settles.

1



Wet face washer in a bowl of cool water then wring out.

2



5-10 minutes

Hold the face washer onto the face for five to ten minutes.

3



Specific recommendations for your child:

Wet wraps

Wet wraps are best applied at night before bed and usually help your child to sleep better. Wet wraps are usually applied every night until the eczema clears and then every second night for one week after to make sure the eczema settles. Your child's treating doctor will tell you how often the wet wraps should be done.

How to apply your child's wet wraps:

1



After bathing, pat dry the skin.

2



Apply cortisone ointment to all affected eczema areas on face and body.

3



Put cotton clothes in a bowl of lukewarm water then wring them out.

4



Put the wet layer of clothing on your child.

5



Put a dry layer on top.

6



Leave the wet wraps in place for 20 minutes.

7



Remove wet wraps.

8



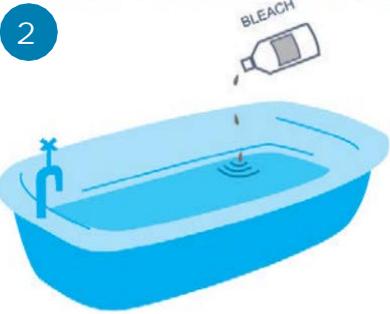
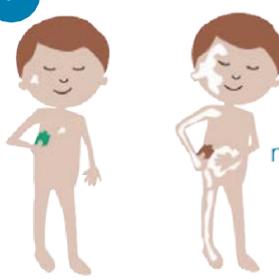
Apply moisturiser to the whole body and face after the wet wraps are removed.

Specific recommendations for your child:

Dilute bleach baths

Eczema is prone to infection. Dilute bleach baths help to treat children with infected eczema. Dilute bleach baths are very safe. The final concentration of bleach when diluted in water is similar to chlorinated swimming pool water. Dilute bleach baths are usually performed twice weekly, but your child's treating doctor will advise you on this.

How to perform a dilute bleach bath:

<p>1</p>  <p>Fill a standard sized bath tub to a quarter full (40L) of lukewarm water. Add two to three capfuls of bath oil to the water.</p>	<p>2</p>  <p>Add 45mL of household bleach (e.g. White King bleach) containing 4.2% sodium hypochlorite.</p>	<p>3</p>  <p>Wash the face and scalp while in the bath avoiding the eyes.</p>
<p>4</p>  <p>Gently wipe any crusts off the skin while in the bath.</p>	<p>5</p>  <p>Your child can soak in the bath for up to ten minutes, no longer.</p>	<p>6</p>  <p>You do not have to rinse after bathing.</p>
<p>7</p>  <p>Use a fresh towel to pat the skin dry.</p>	<p>8</p>  <p>Apply moisturiser to the whole body and face as soon as your child gets out of the bath and is dry.</p>	<p>9</p>  <p>If a cortisone ointment has been prescribed, apply it to affected areas as directed by the doctor before the moisturiser.</p>

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with a disability.

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