



Eczema (Atopic Dermatitis)

Eczema (also called atopic dermatitis) is a common skin problem that causes an itchy, red skin rash that comes and goes. It is seen in children of all ages but most people start showing symptoms before age five. Some children outgrow eczema while others have it all of their lives. Anyone can get eczema but it often runs in families with a history of eczema or other allergic conditions such as asthma and seasonal allergies. It is not contagious.



What are the symptoms of eczema?

Many people call eczema ‘the itch that rashes’ because the itching and dryness often leads to the red patchy areas on the skin. The rash can be dry or oozing and can appear anywhere on the body. In babies, it is often seen on the face, scalp, and front of the arms and legs. In children, it commonly affects the elbow creases and backs of the knees. Sometimes, the severe itching can cause areas of broken skin that can get infected.

----- Eczema Action Plan -----

Eczema symptoms can come and go. When symptoms are worse and the skin becomes irritated, it is often called a “flare-up”. The key to managing eczema is in prevention.

Everyday Tips to Prevent Flare-Ups:

Keep skin very well hydrated

- Use a thick non-prescription cream (such as Eucerin®, Nutraderm® or Cetaphil®) or ointment (such as Aquaphor®, Hydrolatum® or Vaseline®) at least twice a day (the more the better).
- Don’t use lotions – they don’t work as well.
- Take daily lukewarm baths or showers for no more than 10 minutes. Use a small amount of unscented mild soap (such as Dove®). Do not take bubble baths.
- After bathing, gently pat the skin dry (do not rub). Apply the cream or ointment within 3 minutes to lock in the moisture.

Avoid common irritants

- Use laundry detergent and soap with no perfumes or dyes (such as Dreft® or “Free and Clear” detergents).
- Do not use fabric softener.
- 100% cotton clothing and sheets are best. Avoid wool and synthetic materials.
- During the dry winter months, use a humidifier in your home.
- Sometimes allergies to foods, pets, pollen, mold, dust mites can make eczema worse. Talk to your doctor if you suspect an allergy.

Reduce scratching

- Scratching can make the rash worse and cause infection.
- Trim fingernails short and try to distract your child when you notice scratching.
- Some younger children scratch less if they wear cotton gloves while sleeping.



Plan For Flare-Ups: (Your doctor will check off those recommended for you)

When you have a flare-up, it is important to follow your doctor's instructions. Use all medicines exactly as written to prevent side effects. **Call your doctor's office if:**

- You have any questions
- The rash is not improving with the medicines given
- There are signs of infection (fever, skin warmth, tenderness or increased redness).

Continue tips to prevent eczema including use of a moisturizing cream or ointment such as _____ (see above for suggestions). Apply 2 to 3 times per day all over the body especially after bathing.

Topical steroids

- Used to help itchy skin and decrease inflammation.
- Available as creams or ointments and in varied strengths (potencies). You don't need a prescription for the least potent forms (eg, hydrocortisone 1% cream).
- After baths, apply the steroid first. Then apply the emollient cream or ointment.
- Only use for the length of time written by your doctor. Long-term use can cause the medicine to not work as well and may damage the skin.

• For rash on the **FACE**, use _____.
Apply a thin layer ____ time(s)
per day for _____ days.

• For rash on the **BODY**, use _____.
Apply a thin layer ____ time(s)
per day for _____ days.

Anti-itch medicines (antihistamines)

- Some of these medicines (eg, Benadryl®) may cause you to feel sleepy.
- During the day, use _____.
- Before bed, use _____.

Topical antibiotics

- Open cracked areas of skin can lead to a bacterial skin infection.
- Apply _____ to skin ____ time (s) per day whenever there are opened, cracked areas of skin.

Bleach baths

- These baths may help skin infections from eczema happen less often.
- Pour ¼ - ½ cup of liquid chlorine bleach (sodium hypochlorite 6% solution) into a full bathtub (~ 40 gallons) of water. Soak for 5 to 10 minutes twice per week.
- Rinse with fresh water, pat dry, then immediately apply medicines prescribed.

Other treatment recommendations(may include oral steroids or topical immunosuppressive drugs in more severe cases of eczema)