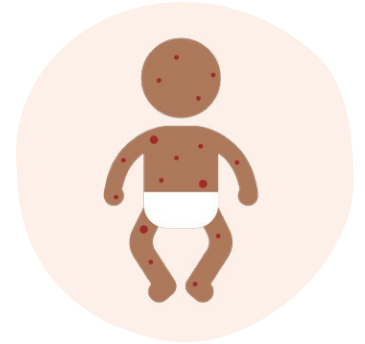


Eczema

(atopic dermatitis)

What is it?

Eczema is a very common skin condition in children that usually starts in the first few months of life. It causes a red, rough and itchy rash. Children (and their family members) with eczema are more likely to have other allergic conditions like asthma or hay fever. Eczema cannot be cured but can be managed well. Most children grow out of their eczema, but they will always have sensitive skin.



How can we look after our skin every day (even when there is no itchy rash)?



Avoid triggers that can make eczema worse:

- ✗ Soaps, shower gels and bubble baths
- ✗ Prickly or rough fabrics
- ✗ Things that can cause allergies like animal hair and grass
- ✗ Overheating and overdressing



Bathing/showering:

- ✓ Bath or shower once each day
- ✓ Use warm (not hot) water and keep it short (less than 5 minutes)
- ✓ Bath oil can be added to the bath
- ✓ A soap-free wash can be used on dirty parts of the body at the end of the bath/shower, it can also be used for hair washing

Keep the skin moisturised:

- ✓ Moisturise the whole body and face at least once each day, more often if the skin is dry
- ✓ Put on moisturiser straight after showering on damp skin
- ✓ Use a moisturiser that is thick, like a cream or an ointment



Try not to scratch eczema as this makes it worse– this is known as the “itch-scratch cycle”:

- ✓ Distraction or putting on more moisturiser may help
- ✓ Keep the nails trimmed short to reduce skin damage from scratching

Your recommended products:



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How can we treat eczema when it gets worse?

As soon as eczema appears or gets worse (e.g. red, rough, itchy rash), follow these 2 steps:

1. Apply the steroid treatment twice each day to all eczema areas.

✓ Face, neck and skin folds:

✓ Body, arms and legs:

✓ Scalp:

2. Continue twice each day until the skin is smooth and the itch is gone, then slowly reduce how often you use the steroid treatment.

For bad eczema, add in a wet wrap once each day for 1 week:

1. After bathing or showering, pat the skin dry.
2. Apply the steroid treatment to the rash.
3. Put towels (or cotton clothing) in a bowl of warm water then wring them out.
4. Wrap the wet towels (or cotton clothing) over the skin.
5. Wrap a dry layer of towels (or cotton clothing) on top, firmly but not tightly.
6. Leave the wet wrap in place for 10-20 minutes.
7. Remove the wet wraps and apply moisturiser to the whole body.

For infected eczema, take the prescribed antibiotics:

For repeated infected eczema, add in a dilute bleach bath 2 times each week:

These are very safe. The mix of bleach and water that is written below is just a little stronger than chlorinated swimming pool water.

1. Fill a standard sized bath tub to half full of lukewarm water.
2. Add 1/4 cup (60mL) of unscented White King Bleach (or 12mL of bleach for every 10L of water).
 - a. Wash the face and scalp while in the bath, avoiding the eyes.
 - b. Gently wipe any crusts off the skin while in the bath.
 - c. Soak in the bath for up to 10 minutes, no longer.
 - d. You do not have to rinse after bathing.
3. Use a fresh towel to pat the skin dry (use old or white towels to avoid bleaching).

Want more information? Visit dermnetnz.org or dermcoll.edu.au/a-to-z-of-skin

This factsheet was developed as part of the Koolungar Moorditj Healthy Skin Project.