

Eczema Action Plan

What is Eczema? Eczema, also called atopic dermatitis, is a chronic disease of the skin—meaning it is an ongoing problem. It causes dry, itchy, irritated skin. It is not contagious. It does sometimes run in families, but not everyone in the family will have eczema. Although there is NO cure, there are good ways to control eczema—the most important being to moisturize!

Here are some tips:

1. Bathing:

- Decrease exposure to water with fewer, shorter, and warm baths or showers. Avoid very hot water.
- After bathing, pat dry-do not rub because this may increase itch
- Apply moisturizer immediately after shower or bath while skin is moist, to lock-in the moisture
- **Bleach bath recipe: ¼ cup bleach in full tub of bath 2-3 times per week**

2. Clothing:

- Cotton and silk clothing are less irritating than wool

3. Irritants:

- Try not to scratch skin, this will worsen itch
- Illness (like a cold) and allergies can cause flares

4. Soaps:

- Avoid antibacterial & harsh soaps like Lever 2000, Ivory, Irish Spring, Dial, etc
- Recommended soaps: Cetaphil, Aveeno, Dove, CeraVe

5. Moisturizers:

- Should be applied *multiple times a day*
- Avoid soaps & moisturizers with fragrance
- Recommended Creams: CeraVe, Aveeno
- Recommended Emollients: Aquaphor, Vaseline

6. Sunscreens:

- Use mineral based SPF (zinc or titanium)
- Avoid chemical sunscreens and spray sunscreens which contain alcohol

7. Other:

- Clothing detergents: All Free & Clear, Tide Clear
- Avoid: dryer sheets

What to Do in a Flare:

Despite good routine care, eczema may still flare. The plan below will tell you what medications*^ to use and when.

Normal/Dry: normal skin, not much itching

- Plan: regular skin care routine; moisturize AT LEAST twice daily

Mild: itchy skin with light redness

- Plan:

For face:

For body:

Moderate: bad itching that keeps you awake at night or causes scratches that leave marks

- Plan:

For face:

For body:

Severe: skin that is painful, red, crusted, or has pus; Other symptoms like fever or chills

- Plan: Call your doctor. An appointment may be necessary

*Topical steroids should be used where and when active eczema is present and for a shorter length of time (generally 2 weeks for stronger steroids).

^Elidel (pimecrolimus) and Protopic (tacrolimus) may cause mild tingling at first. This is normal and will resolve with continued usage.