

SOUTHFIELD PEDIATRICS

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Treatment of Dry Skin (Eczema)

Eczema is a chronic skin condition manifested by dry, scaly skin with occasional flare-ups of redness and itching. This appears to be an inherited condition in families with a history of asthma, allergies, or eczema. The areas of dryness and redness shift as children get older. In infants the worst areas tend to be on the face, particularly the cheeks. As children get older the dry areas tend to occur more on the arms and legs, but can occur on any part of the body. Since eczema is caused by dryness of the skin, it tends to get much worse in the winter when the air is very dry.

Treating any chronic condition is difficult and takes persistence. The mainstay of treatment for eczema is frequent moisturizing to try to keep the moisture in the skin. Bathing should be done daily with a mild cleanser such as Dove or Moisturel cleanser. After the bath the child should be patted dry (rubbing can irritate the skin) and while the child is still damp a thick layer of moisturizing cream should be applied to all of the affected areas. Moisturizing creams are much better for this than lotions which are not as thick. The cream or lotion should be applied one or two other times during the day to help keep the skin moist. Eucerin Cream is very good. Lotions such as Eucerin lotion, Moisturel, Keri-Lotion, and Lubriderm are also good choices.

Most of the time with frequent moisturizing the skin should stay soft. Occasionally, however, there will still be times when the skin gets red, rough, and itchy. For these times steroid creams are the main part of treatment. For the face, mild creams such as 1/2% or 1% hydrocortisone are best. For other parts of the body stronger creams may be recommended. People with dark skin should be judicious in their use of steroid creams since they can cause permanent lightening of the skin if used for prolonged periods of time.

Children with eczema have skin sensitive to many of irritants. Wool or other itchy clothing can make eczema worse. Cotton clothing should be used as much as possible. Dry or cold air can also worsen eczema and should be avoided if possible.

For today you should use:

Moisturizer two or three times daily. For the face_____.

For the body_____ For itching_____.

Recommendations for Eczema

Eczema is an allergic condition of the skin, which can be triggered by dryness, foods, trauma (such as scratching), perfumes, color additives, and other things that touch the skin. The goal of eczema treatment is to keep the skin moist and avoid exposure to triggers.

Detergents, soaps, and lotions that are scented or colored are classic triggers, thus many "baby" products should be avoided, as well as dryer sheets and fabric softeners. Treat the entire family's clothing and sheets the same so to avoid exposure to triggers. Shorter baths, less than ten minutes, cause less drying of the skin. Attempt to apply plenty of lotion frequently. Avoid wool products. Observe for food triggers, such as tomatoes, peaches, strawberries, shellfish, nuts.

Recommended Soaps: Eucerin cleanser, Cetaphil cleanser, Aveeno, Free & Clear, Basis Soap

Recommended Detergents: All Free & Clear, Tide Free
(these are better for babies than Dreft)

Recommended Lotions: Cetaphil, Eucerin, Aquaphor, Aveeno, Sarna