

## ECZEMA

Eczema is a chronic skin condition that often presents in childhood, and presents as itchy, red, dry, cracked and even thickened skin. It is a genetically inherited condition that can be worsened with exposure to external or environmental factors, as well as internal factors like hormones and stress.

The following may worsen the symptoms of eczema:

- prolonged or hot showers
- hair products
- drying soaps and detergents
- dryer sheets
- dust and pet fur
- smoke
- rapid temperature changes and extremes of temperatures
- perfumes
- smelly lotions
- excessive sweating
- hormone levels
- certain fabrics like wool

Recommended solutions and products:

- Avoidance of triggers if possible
- Luke warm short showers/baths, pat do not rub skin dry
- Dove soap for hands and body
- All Free & Clear detergent for washing clothes
- Do not use dryer sheets
- *Aveeno*, *Neutrogena*, Baby Shampoo or tolerated products that are scent-free
- Look for hypoallergenic hair spray products like *Nexus*, *Redken*
- Cotton fabrics

Treatments for Eczema:

- The mainstay of therapy is to improve the barrier function of the skin by keeping it hydrated with either *Cetaphil Body lotion*, *Aquaphor*, *CeraVe*, or prescription strength *Lac-Hydrin*; applying to damp skin up to three times a day.
- For acute flare ups use of topical steroids, once or twice daily for no more than two weeks may be recommended by your doctor. (Steroids are classified by strength and may be used based on severity. Low potency: hydrocortisone .5-2.5%, moderate potency: fluticasone .05% or triamcinolone .1%, or high potency: mometasone .1%, betamethasone .05%. For severe flare ups ultra strength potency steroids may be used like clobetasol .05%, halobetasol .05%.) Never apply a steroid cream without speaking to

your doctor first as side effects include thinning of the skin, dark or lighter markings in skin, burning, itching, high glucose levels, etc.

- *Elidel 1% or Protopic .03%* applied twice daily can be used when topical steroids don't control symptoms, these are second line medications.
- Antibiotics may be prescribed if there is evidence of bacterial colonization. When the skin is dry and cracked there is opportunity for bacteria to penetrate. There may be increased redness, oozing of fluid, and crusting. The most common pathogen being *Staphylococcus aureus*.
- Patients with persistent itching or sleep disturbance may benefit from sedating anti-histamines, like *Benadryl OTC 25-50mg at night, Doxepin 10mg at night, or Atarax 25-50mg every 6hours as needed*.
- If you experience a severe flare contact your doctor as soon as possible.