



This Family Education Sheet teaches you how to care for your child's eczema. You will learn about:

- How to give your child a bath
- What soaps to use
- Medications for treatment of eczema

Baths

- Daily baths may help soothe itching skin and remove crusting.
- Have your child soak in lukewarm water for 10 to 15 minutes.
- Immediately after bathing is the best time to apply moisturizers and prescription ointments.

Dilute bleach baths

Baths with a small amount of bleach in them can be helpful for your child's eczema.

How to make a dilute bleach bath:

- 1 Add a half cup of plain bleach to a full tub of lukewarm bathwater (or a teaspoon of bleach for each gallon of water) and stir the bath.
- 2 Have your child soak in the bleach bath for 10 to 15 minutes. Try to soak the entire body from the neck down.
- 3 It's safe to get your child's head wet as well.

Soaps

While your child's skin needs cleaning, many soaps have ingredients in them that can irritate your child's eczema.

- Only use soaps on dirty areas and rinse it off with water right away.
- Dove® fragrance-free soap and Cetaphil® cleanser are OK to use.

Medicated ointment

Topical corticosteroids

"Topical" means something that is applied to the skin. "Steroids" are a group of natural hormones made in the body that are also used in medicines. The use of topical steroids has many benefits for eczema, including reducing redness and soreness and making the skin less itchy.

- **Gently rub a small amount of the ointment on the affected areas only (red, itchy spots) 2 times a day.**
 - Hydrocortisone 1% or 2.5% and desonide are safe to use for a longer period of time on most areas of the body and face.

Stronger medicines

- Your doctor may prescribe stronger medicines, such as triamcinolone, fluocinolone, mometasone, betamethasone and clobetasol, for your child to use for a short period of time.
 - **Do not put these medicines on the face, groin or inner thigh unless told to do so by the doctor.** They may thin the skin if used in these areas.
 - After using these medicines for 1 to 2 weeks, they are usually replaced by weaker treatments.

Topical immunomodulators

Protopic (tacrolimus) and Elidel (pimecrolimus)

A topical immunomodulator is an ointment put on the skin that affects how the immune system of the skin works. This helps to reduce inflammation and redness.

- **Gently rub a small amount on the affected areas only (red, itchy spots) 2 times a day.**
- Mild stinging may occur but should get better in 1 week. To decrease stinging, do not apply this medicine to cuts or scrapes.
- Use this ointment until the eczema goes away for one week, then stop. Restart the use of this medicine if the rash comes back.

Moisturizers

Moisturizers work to reduce dryness in the skin by trapping in moisture.

- They should be applied to normal and affected skin after prescription ointments have been applied.
- The most useful time to use moisturizers is right after bathing or showering.
- Avoid moisturizers with perfumes, alcohol and preservatives.
- For dry skin, greasier ointments are best.
- Some moisturizers are hydrated petrolatum (this doesn't require a prescription but you must ask the pharmacist for this), petroleum and mineral oil.

Antihistamines

Antihistamines help to control itching and come in pill or liquid form.

- Antihistamines may cause sleepiness. In rare cases, they may cause hyperactivity (problems paying attention, sitting still, etc.).
- The most commonly prescribed antihistamines are hydroxyzine and diphenhydramine.

Antihistamines (continued)

- Antihistamines are best given before bedtime and the dose may be repeated every 4 to 6 hours.
- With continued use, antihistamines may lose their effectiveness. Use these only when the itching is at its worse.
- Non-sedating (does not make you tired) antihistamines, such as cetirizine, loratadine and fexofenadine, may be used for to help itching during the day.

Antibiotics

Oral antibiotics (a pill or liquid taken by mouth) may be prescribed if the skin becomes infected. Signs of infection include:

- Open and moist areas of the skin that may leak fluid or become crusted
- A lot of skin redness
- Small bumps filled with clear fluid or pus
- Antibiotics are taken for 10 to 14 days. If your child has continued infections or severe eczema, your child's doctor may prescribe a longer course of antibiotics for your child.
- Mupirocin is an antibiotic ointment that may be prescribed for small areas of infected skin.

This Family Education Sheet is available in [Spanish](#).