

Children's Emergency Department

Eczema - parent/carer discharge information



Eczema is often called dermatitis or atopic dermatitis - all terms mean the same thing. Eczema is an itchy skin condition that often runs in families - children or other family members may also have asthma or hayfever. It usually begins before your child is 12 months old. Eczema makes skin dry, itchy and inflamed – the skin may be red, cracked and oozing or weeping.

Babies with eczema tend to have a red dry rash on their face and occasionally on their scalp, eyebrows, behind their ears and on their bodies, arms, and legs. Older children tend to have the rash in the creases of their knees, wrists, elbows, and ankles.

Eczema can be well controlled and there are ways you can help your child's eczema feel more comfortable. You will notice that your child's eczema fluctuates with it being better controlled at times and less so at other times. It is therefore important to manage it effectively and control it as soon as it flares up.

What should I do to help my child?

- Avoid overheating your child at home, especially in bed at night
- Avoid skin irritants such as soaps, bubble bath, perfumed products, detergents, and chemicals - use soap-free body wash in the bath
- Keep your child's skin well moisturised with fragrance free moisturiser
- Keep your child's fingernails clean and short and try to stop them scratching



Patient Information

- Try to use cotton clothing
- Be cautious of swimming pools – chlorine can make eczema worse – moisturise before and shower and moisturise immediately after swimming
- House dust mites in carpets and animal fur may make it worse: Hoover often or consider removing carpets and pets if they appear to be the trigger
- Do not let anyone with cold sores kiss your child, as the herpes simplex virus that causes the cold sore can cause severe skin infection in eczema.

When should I seek medical advice?

- If the eczema flares up, becomes widespread or very distressing to the child, your GP will be able to prescribe you some mild steroid ointments to control it
- If the eczema becomes red, angry, weeping or blistered - this can mean that the eczema has become infected and will need antibiotics or other treatment

For further advice/information:

- Ask your GP and/ or Health Visitor

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 7696 6934 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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