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The Children's Asthma and Allergy Network
@ The Children's Medical Institute


HOW IS ECZEMA TREATED?

Two main areas of therapy are:

A) MOISTURIZE, MOISTURIZE, MOISTURIZE

Dry skin is one of the hallmark of eczema. When the skin is dry, it is prone to itching and cracking, which allows allergens to enter the skin and worsen the eczema. You should moisturize the skin as often as possible, at least 2 to 3 times per day. For bathing, use mild soaps, pat dry the skin and apply the moisturizer while the skin is still damp. Do not apply moisturizer on sweaty skin. Moisturizer can be applied to all parts of the body, even the face. You can use the moisturizer recommended by your doctor, or any of the brands available on the market that do not contain alcohol or scents.

B) REMOVE TRIGGERS


 As woolen materials and clothing of synthetic materials may irritate the skin, cotton clothing is more suitable. Detergents and harsh soaps are also irritants, as is a child's saliva. Emotion is another trigger that is difficult to control. If dust mites are an aggravating factor, your doctor may recommend methods to reduce the dust mites in your home. In very young children, food allergy may be involved, but consult your doctor for a thorough evaluation if this is suspected.

C) ANTI-INFLAMMATORY TOPICAL MEDICATION

Your doctor may sometimes prescribe other medications to reduce inflammation on the skin. Steroids cream are generally safe and very effective in clearing eczema. They should only be used as prescribed by the doctor.

D) ANTI-ITCH MEDICATION

Doctors also sometimes prescribe topical or oral anti-itch medicines to decrease the itch and help your child sleep at night. As scratching is an aggravating factor in eczema, reducing the itch is an important part of treatment. Remember that adequate moisturizing also helps reduce itch.



E) ANTI-BACTERIAL MEDICATION

Some bacteria and antigen may aggravate the eczema. Your doctor may sometime prescribe topical or oral antibiotics to treat your child's eczema.

CAN MY CHILD GO SWIMMING?

Yes. But avoid the hot sun. Always remember to moisturize your skin after swimming.

I'VE DONE ALL THAT, DOCTOR... BUT

With the above measures, eczema can remain under control most of the time. Some individuals however may experience flares despite following the guidelines. It is important not to give up but to be patient and continue treatment, especially moisturizing. After each acute flare up, the trigger will usually go away and your child will experience a remission (will get better). Consult your doctor if you have any worries or questions

