

Eczema or Atopic Dermatitis, is a rash often affecting the face, elbows, and knees. This red, scaly, itchy rash is usually seen in young infants, but can occur later in life in individuals with personal or family histories of other allergic conditions. Common triggers include infections, allergens, overheating/sweating, emotional stress, eating certain foods, and contact with irritants such as wool, soaps, or other chemicals.

Eczema can have many causes/triggers, but frequently involves chronic dry skin, exposure to allergens, repeated trauma to the skin from chronic itching and scratching, and recurrent infections from bacteria such as *Staphylococcus Aureus*. Improving eczema requires minimizing the effects of all these potential triggers. Adequate nutrition is also essential.

Below are my recommendations for eczema care:

Bathing:

- **SOAK:** Take one bath in lukewarm water lasting at least 10-15 minutes each day
- Use mild soaps (Dove, Neutrogena)
- Gently pat skin dry with a towel, NO rubbing!

Moisturizing:

- **SEAL:** Apply moisturizing cream right after bath AND at least twice a day
- Use creams or ointments, NOT lotions which dry the skin over time
- I recommend the following moisturizing creams: Eucerin cream and Aquaphor ointment

Relieve Itching:

- Wear socks and gloves often, even while asleep to prevent scratching
- Wear loose-fitting cotton clothes; AVOID synthetic fabrics, tight-fitting clothes, and wool
- Wash clothes in hypoallergenic detergents (Dreft, All Free/Clear, Tide Free/Gentle)
- Take antihistamines (Zyrtec/Claritin/Benadryl/Xyzal/Hydroxyzine) as prescribed

Prevent Infection:

- Keep fingernails trimmed as short as possible
- OTC Bacitracin ointment to open skin to decrease infection (AVOID Neosporin which can cause Contact Dermatitis)

Nutrition:

- Ensure adequate intake of Vitamin D (400IU/day), DHA/EPA and Omega 3 fatty acids, and antioxidants (Vitamin C, Vitamin E) from fresh fruits and vegetables