

# Eczema Action Plan

**What is Eczema?** Eczema, also called atopic dermatitis, is a chronic disease of the skin – meaning it is an ongoing problem. It causes dry, itchy, irritated skin. It is not contagious. It does sometimes run in families, but not everyone in the family will have eczema. Although there is NO cure, there are good ways to control-eczema – *the most important being moisturize!*

Here are some tips:

1. Bathing:
  - ❖ Decrease exposure to water with fewer, shorter, and cooler baths
  - ❖ After bathing, pat dry – do not rub because this may increase itch
  - ❖ **Apply moisturizer immediately after shower or bath** while skin is moist, to lock-in the moisture
  - ❖ **Bleach bath recipe:** ¼ cup bleach in full tub of bath 1-2 times per week
2. Clothing
  - ❖ **Cotton clothing** (non-synthetics) are less irritating than wool
  - ❖ Long sleeves & pants are best for children to protect skin from irritating substance and to keep children from scratching
3. Irritants
  - ❖ **Try not to scratch skin** as this will worsen the itch
  - ❖ Illness (like a cold) and allergies can cause flares
4. Soaps
  - ❖ Avoid antibacterial & harsh soaps like Lever 2000, Ivory, Irish Spring, Dial, etc.
  - ❖ Recommended soaps: Cetaphil, Purpose, Dove, CeraVe
5. Moisturizers – should be applied multiple times a day!
  - ❖ Avoid soaps & moisturizers with fragrance – use products labeled with “fragrance free”
  - ❖ **Recommended creams:** CeraVe, Cetaphil, Curel, Creamy Petroleum Jelly
  - ❖ **Recommended emollients:** Aquaphor, Vaseline

## What to Do in a Flare:

Despite good routine care, eczema may still flare. The plans below will tell you what medications to use/steps to take and when. Topical steroids are considered the primary treatment for eczema. They should be used only where and when active eczema is present and only for the length of time, generally 2 weeks for the stronger steroids, recommended by your doctor. You can go back and forth with 2 weeks of the topical steroids followed by 2 weeks of aggressive moisturization and repeat.

**Normal/Dry:** Normal skin, not much itching

- ❖ **Plan:** Regular skin care routine; moisturize AT LEAST twice daily or with every diaper change

**Mild:** Itchy skin with light redness

- ❖ **Plan:** Apply topical steroid as instructed by your doctor; regular skin care routine; moisturize AT LEAST twice daily or with every diaper change

**Moderate:** Bad itching that keeps you awake at night or causes scratches that leaves marks

- ❖ **Plan:** Apply topical steroid as instructed by your doctor; regular skin care routine; moisturize AT LEAST twice daily or with every diaper change

**Severe:** Skin that is painful, red, crusted, or has pus; other symptoms like fever or chills

- ❖ **Plan:** Call your doctor! An appointment may be necessary



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