



Information for Patients and Carers

Eczema in Children

What is eczema?

Eczema is a common skin condition in children. It happens because the skin does not hold moisture as well as it should. Eczema can make your child's skin dry, itchy, sore, or cracked.

Eczema often comes and goes. Your child may have times when the skin is better, and times when it gets worse. These worse periods are called flare ups.

To help prevent eczema flare ups:

1. Use moisturising creams (emollients) every day
Even when the skin looks good, creams help keep skin soft and stops eczema from coming back. Dry skin needs lots of cream – you can use as much as they need! There are lots of different eczema creams to choose from - ask your pharmacist or GP for advice

2. Stay away from things that make the eczema worse like:

- Soaps and bubble baths - use a soap substitute from the pharmacy instead
- Some washing powders
- Scratching – keep your child's nails short and clean. Wearing cotton clothes can help

3. Use special flare up creams when the skin gets red or sore

Doctors sometimes give special creams (usually steroid creams) to calm the skin down during a flare up. If your child has been given a steroid cream, use it as soon as you see a flare up (the red or sore areas). Apply a thin layer, just enough to cover the eczema flare area, every day.

Steroid creams are safe when used properly and can help calm the skin during a flare up. They are usually just needed for a few days at a time. If you find you are needing to use the flare control cream for more than a few weeks consult your child's GP or a pharmacist.



This video explains more about eczema and how to care for your child's skin

Where to go for help

If you are worried about your child's eczema, or it is not getting better with treatment, please contact your GP. Your local pharmacist can also give advice, over the counter creams and treatment for skin infections such as impetigo (for children over 1 year old).

If you are not sure, you can check your child's symptoms using NHS 111

- By using 111 online (if your child is 5 years old or older)
- By calling 111 – you can ask for an interpreter
- By Text Relay – call 18001 111 using text relay, 24 hours a day
- By using signvideo.co.uk/nhs111 if you need British Sign Language

You should ask for an urgent GP appointment or contact 111 if your child has signs that the eczema has become infected such as:

- Your child's skin becomes very painful or gets worse quickly
- Your child skin gets lots of blisters, golden crusting, is leaking fluid or pus
- Your child has large areas of broken, raw skin
- Your child has signs of a skin infection and has a fever (a temperature over 38°C)

Support for you and your child

There are also helpful groups like Eczema Outreach Support (EOS) and Eczema UK that can help children and families living with eczema.



To access more about this and to be able to read this in different languages, please visit our Paediatric Emergency Department webpage on <https://mft.nhs.uk/eczema/>

