



Name: _____

Date of birth: _____

Doctor: _____

Date: _____

Having eczema means your skin is lacking the particular body substances that usually keep skin supple and intact. When damaged, moisture evaporates from the skin, cells shrink and cause cracks. Allergens and irritants can get in, triggering your skin to release certain chemicals that make your skin feel itchy. If you scratch, more chemicals are released and the itchier your skin feels. This **'scratch and itch cycle'** is most distressing.

HOW THIS PLAN CAN HELP YOU

Whilst there is no cure for eczema, it is possible to moisturise and create a barrier on the surface to keep the added moisture in and the irritants and triggers out. This plan aims to provide strategies to keep your or your child's skin in the best condition possible.

BATHING & SHOWERING

Any product that bubbles is trouble (J. Carr 2006). Avoid using soap or soap based products that can thin and dry the skin. Use non-soap based products (bath oils, body washes) that cleanse the skin by helping dirt stick to the product, which is then rinsed off. If you like to use soap on hairy parts of the body, try to use a cleansing bar, but rinse off thoroughly and avoid using it on less hairy skin areas. Non-soap products are mostly available from pharmacies, not supermarkets. Cosmetic body washes are NOT recommended. **Your skin does not have to feel dry and tight to be 'clean'.**

MOISTURISING

By including effective moisturising into part of your daily routine you will usually find your skin flares less often, the flares may be less severe and you are less prone to infection. It is up to you to maintain this. *It is like a car - if you let servicing and maintenance slip the car will falter. It is the same with your skin.*

INFECTION

Infection is a common trigger for eczema flares. As damaged skin has a greater chance of becoming infected, it is important to watch for signs of infection, such as redness, weeping sores and/or yellowish crusted sores on the skin. If infected seek antibiotic treatment, prescribed by your doctor, as soon as possible. Extra care is needed if a person with eczema is around someone with **cold sores**, caused by the herpes simplex virus (HSV), which can infect damaged skin, cause blistering and make you very unwell. Seek medical help immediately, if you suspect this infection, as it can be treated with antiviral medication. **Molluscum contagiosum** is a warty looking virus commonly occurring in children including those with eczema. Scratching will spread the infection. Although it can be distressing, it will disappear over time without treatment. When **Chicken Pox** appear, eczema often improves. After the infectious period has passed and scabs appear, eczema often returns, so use your skin care routine to restore moisture. As **immunisation** tries to fool the body into thinking it has an infection, eczema may flare. However it is very important to have immunisations on the correct schedules. You should always tell your doctor that you have eczema before any immunisations.

THE 3 STEPS FOR ECZEMA SKIN CARE

STEP 1 - MAINTAIN

- Use a non-greasy moisturiser when skin is under control
- Use..... cream..... times daily

Non-greasy creams usually contain glycerine and mineral oils, such as most brands of Sorbolene, QV (Ego), Dermodrate (DermaTech), Hamilton Lotion, Dermaveen Moisture Lotion, Hydraderm, Alpha-keri lotion and Neutrogena moisture creams. Avoid parabens as some people may be sensitive to these.

Suggestion: To help you remember, moisturise at least twice per day, when you clean your teeth.



If skin feels dry or if you need to apply STEP 1 type moisturiser more than 4 times daily, go to STEP 2

STEP 2 - PROTECT & REPAIR

- Use thick creams containing white and/or soft paraffin
- Use.....cream.....times daily or whenever skin feels dry

Thicker creams include QV Cream (Ego), Dermaveen eczema cream, Cetaphil (unless nut allergy diagnosed) and E45 (Boots).

Suggestion: You can use step 2 creams during the day and a greasy cream from step 3 at night within a few minutes after bathing.



If skin feels very dry or if any areas look like they might flare, go to STEP 3

STEP 3 - INTENSIVE TREATMENT

- Use greasy creams containing white and soft paraffin
- Use.....cream.....times daily

Greasy creams include Dermeze (Aspen) and QV Intensive (Ego).

If your doctor has prescribed topical corticosteroid ointments for when your eczema flares to reduce inflammation, use in the amount suggested by your doctor (refer to Action Plan).

.....BODY only
.....FACE only