



Atopic Dermatitis 101 for Parents



WHAT IS ATOPIC DERMATITIS?

Atopic dermatitis (AD) is the most common type of eczema. It often appears as a red, itchy rash or dry, scaly patches on the skin. AD usually begins in infancy or childhood but can develop at any point in a person's lifetime. It commonly shows up on the face, inside of the elbows or behind the knees, but it can appear anywhere on the body.

IS IT CONTAGIOUS?

You can't catch atopic dermatitis or spread it to others.

WHAT CAUSED MY CHILD'S AD?

While the exact cause is unknown, researchers do know that people develop atopic dermatitis because of a combination of genes and a trigger. Children with AD tend to have an over-reactive immune system that when triggered by something outside or inside the body, responds by producing inflammation. It is this inflammation that causes red, itchy and painful skin symptoms.

Research also shows that some children with atopic dermatitis have a mutation in the gene responsible for filaggrin. Filaggrin helps our bodies maintain a healthy protective barrier on the very top layer of the skin. Without enough filaggrin, moisture can escape and bacteria, viruses and more can enter. This is why many children with AD have very dry and infection-prone skin.

IS AD RELATED TO OTHER CONDITIONS?

Atopic dermatitis is part of a group of allergic conditions. In fact, "atopic" means allergy. These include asthma, hay fever and food allergies. Children from families with a history of AD, asthma or hay fever are more likely to develop AD.

Research also suggests that people with AD have higher rates of food allergy and depression/anxiety.

IS THERE A CURE?

There is no cure for atopic dermatitis yet, but there are treatments available and more are on the way.

WHAT ARE THE TREATMENT OPTIONS?

It is important to have a regular schedule with AD care that includes bathing with a gentle cleanser and moisturizing to lock water into the skin and repair the skin barrier. Moisturized skin helps control flares by combating dryness and keeping out irritants and allergens.

Depending on severity of symptoms, AD treatments include lifestyle changes, over-the-counter (OTC) and natural remedies, prescription topical medications, which are applied to the skin; immunosuppressants, usually taken by mouth in the form of a pill; and phototherapy, a form of ultraviolet light treatment.

HOW DO I CONTROL AD FLARES?

For most types of eczema, managing the condition comes down to these basics: 1. Know your child's triggers; 2. Implement a regular bathing and moisturizing routine; 3. Use OTC and/or prescription medication consistently and as prescribed.

However, some parents find that even when they do all the "right" things, their child's AD still flares. AD can be an unpredictable disease. Having an eczema flare "out of the blue" is common and can happen despite your best efforts.

ABOUT NEA

National Eczema Association (NEA) is the leading advocacy organization serving people with eczema and those who love them. Go to nationaleczema.org to find out more.



Steps to Soak and Seal

The Soak and Seal method of treating eczema is recommended by many providers to combat dry skin and reduce flares. To get the full therapeutic benefit, Soak and Seal often and follow the steps in order.

INGREDIENTS



Bathtub



Water



Moisturizer



Prescription topical medication

DIRECTIONS

STEP

- 1 Fill bath with warm water and soak for 5 to 10 minutes

STEP

- 2 After bathing, pat the skin lightly with a towel, leaving it slightly damp

STEP

- 3 Apply prescription topical medication to the eczema-affected areas of skin as directed

STEP

- 4 Within three minutes, liberally apply a moisturizer all over the body

STEP

- 5 Wait a few minutes to let the moisturizer absorb into the skin before dressing or applying wet wraps

THINGS TO REMEMBER

DO NOT use excessively hot or cold water

DO NOT scrub the skin with a loofah or rough washcloth

DO NOT wait longer than 3 minutes after bathing to apply moisturizer

DO avoid using soap, harsh bubble baths or perfumed bath washes

DO Soak and Seal several times a week or as your schedule allows.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL ECZEMA ASSOCIATION

National Eczema Association (NEA) is the leading advocacy organization serving people with eczema and those who love them. NEA provides information, resources and support to more than 6 million people each year, while funding research leading to better treatments and a cure for the millions of Americans affected by eczema. Go to nationaleczema.org to find out more.



Caring for Eczema – Easy as 1, 2, 3

Eczema is a recurring condition that results in dry, easily irritated, itchy skin. The best way to keep it under control is to establish a daily skincare regimen and stick with it. Here's how to care for eczema in three easy steps.



1 CLEAN

Take at least one bath or shower daily, using lukewarm — not hot — water for 5-10 minutes. Many dermatologists recommend bathing at night before bedtime, when the skin is more likely to lock in moisture while keeping irritants out. Use a gentle cleanser recommended for sensitive skin with no added fragrances or dyes and a low PH (below 5.5). Avoid rubbing or scrubbing the affected skin with a washcloth or loofah.



2 TREAT

After bathing, pat the skin lightly with a towel leaving it slightly damp. Water softens the skin and enables it to better absorb medication and moisturizer. Now apply a thin coat of the topical medication prescribed by your doctor to affected areas of the skin only. Always follow your doctor's dosage and application recommendations as well as any directions for applying certain medications to specific areas of the body.



3 MOISTURIZE

Now liberally apply a moisturizer all over the body (not just the eczema areas) to lock in moisture. Ointments and creams are more beneficial than lotions for people with dry skin conditions because the water in lotion evaporates quicker. Dispense moisturizer with a pump or clean spoon to avoid contamination. Apply it with your palms, stroking lightly in a downward direction. Wait a few minutes to let the moisturizer absorb into the skin before dressing. Don't limit moisturizing to bath time. Slather it on throughout the day whenever the skin starts to itch or feel dry.

BONUS BATHING AND MOISTURIZING TIPS

- Look for cleansers and moisturizers with National Eczema Association's Seal of Acceptance™ on the label. These products are intended for use by people with eczema or sensitive skin. You should always test a small amount on your skin before full use to ensure there are not personal sensitivities to ingredients.
- Bleach baths are thought to reduce the risk of staph infections by decreasing bacteria on the skin and reducing inflammation in both children and adults.
- During particularly intense eczema flare-ups, wet wrap therapy can work wonders to rehydrate and calm the skin.



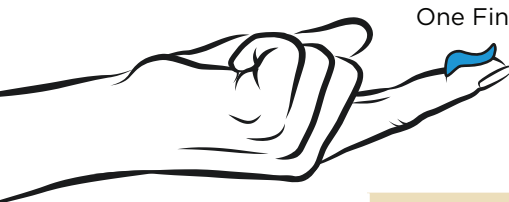
Give Topical Steroids the Fingertip

Topical steroids are commonly prescribed for eczema. They help ease redness and reduce inflammation so that skin can begin to heal. It is important to use steroids as prescribed to reduce the risk of side effects.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW WHEN USING A TOPICAL STEROID?

- Only use the steroid as prescribed by your provider
- Apply the steroid to eczema-affected areas of your skin only
- Do not apply steroids on sensitive areas such as the eyelids or genitals
- Once inflammation is under control, reduce or stop using the steroid as directed by your provider
- After you apply the steroid, follow up with a moisturizer on top
- Avoid using large quantities of steroids for long periods of time

HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?



One Fingertip Unit (FTU) is amount of ointment or cream squeezed out of a tube, from the tip of an adult index finger to the first crease in the finger.

	Face and Neck	Arm and Hand	Leg and Foot	Chest and Stomach	Back and Bottom
3-12 months	1 FTU	1 FTU	2 FTUs	1 FTU	2 FTUs
1 -3 years	2 FTUs	2 FTUs	3 FTUs	2 FTUs	3 FTUs
3-6 years	2 FTUs	2 FTUs	3 FTUs	3 FTUs	3 FTUs
6-10 years	2 FTUs	3 FTUs	4 FTUs	3 FTUs	4 FTUs
10 years through adult	3 FTUs	3 FTUs	4 FTUs	4 FTUs	4 FTUs

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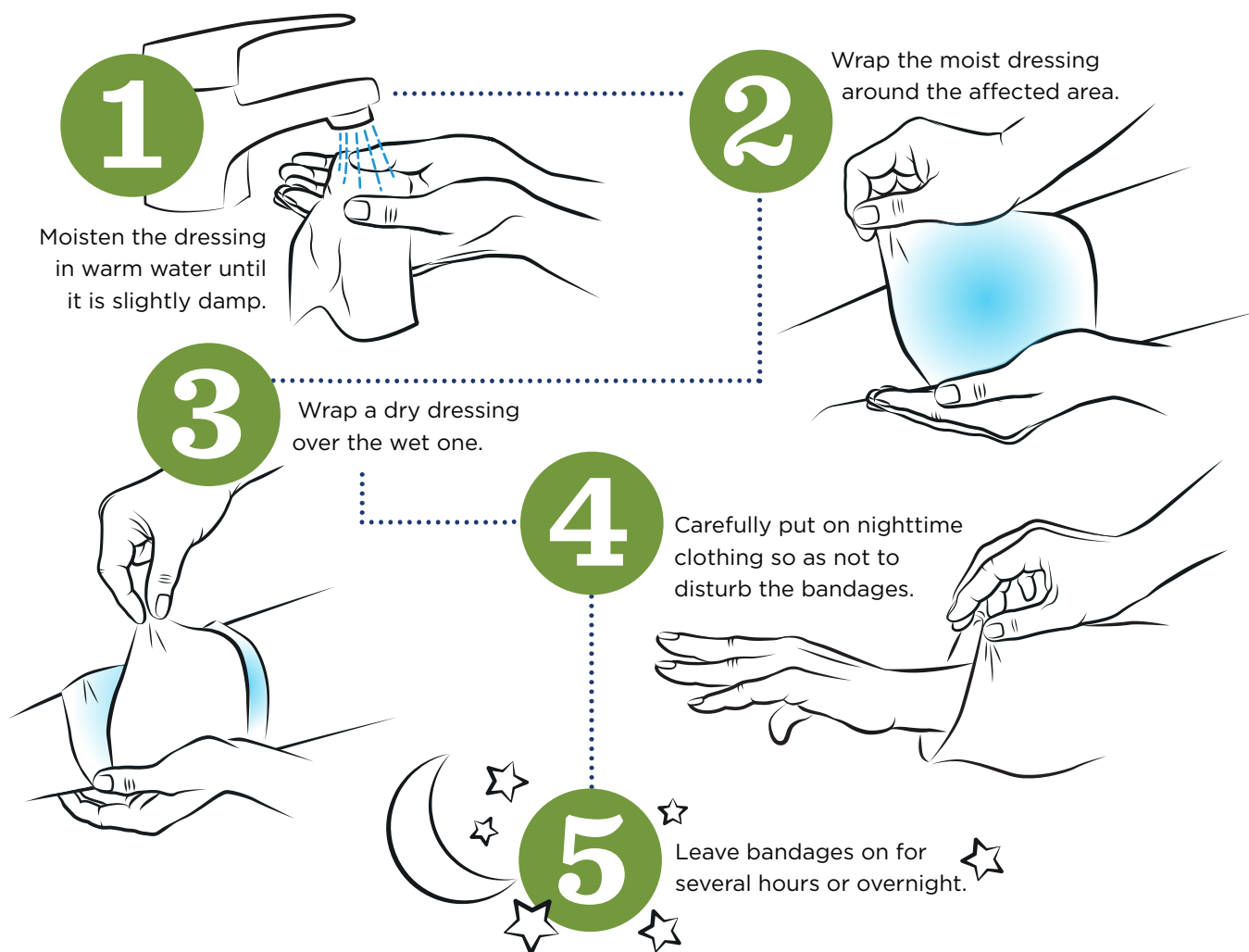
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Wet Wrap Step-By-Step

During particularly intense eczema flare-ups with severe itch or pain, wet wrap therapy can work wonders to rehydrate and calm the skin and help topical medications work better.

Wet wraps are best done in the evening after bathing, moisturizing and applying medication. You can use clean, cotton clothing as a dressing and pajamas or a onesie on top if the eczema is widespread, cotton gloves or socks if it is not.



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Bleach Bath Recipe Card

Taking bleach baths two to three times per week is thought to reduce inflammation and the risk of developing staph infections by safely decreasing bacteria on the skin. This bleach bath recipe has the same level of chlorine in your average swimming pool.

INGREDIENTS



Bathtub



Water



Regular or "unconcentrated" household bleach (5.25% sodium hypochlorite)



Measuring spoons/cups

DIRECTIONS

STEP

- 1 Fill bath tub with lukewarm water

STEP

- 2 Add 1/2 cup bleach for a full standard-size bathtub of water (approx. 40 gallons); 1/4 cup for a half bathtub of water (approx. 20 gallons); 2 tablespoons for a baby bathtub (approx. 4 gallons)

STEP

- 3 Get in and soak for 10 minutes

STEP

- 4 Rinse off completely with warm tap water

STEP

- 5 Proceed with daily skin care routine

THINGS TO REMEMBER

DO NOT use excessively hot or cold water

DO NOT add any other products or ingredients to the bath

DO NOT soak for longer than 15 minutes

DO NOT submerge your head or face under the water

DO consult with your health care provider first before trying a bleach bath or giving one to your child for the first time

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