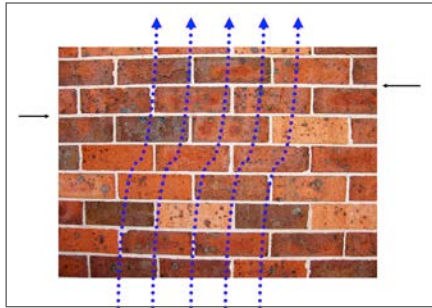
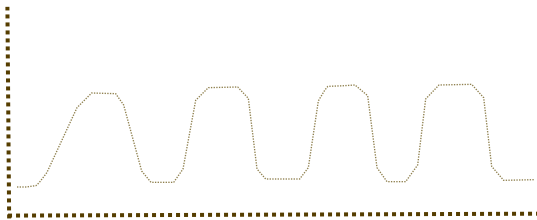


WHAT CAUSES ECZEMA



WHAT ECZEMA DOES AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT



QUICK FACTS ON TOPICAL STEROIDS

- Although there are many different strengths of topical steroids, the side-effect sheets list the same items. They are *not* all the same.
- Don't be confused by the percentages (*i.e. 0.1% betamethasone is stronger than 2.5% hydrocortisone*)
- To treat the area of 2 palm sizes, use the amount of medicine that will cover 1 fingertip
- You should be able to clear the eczema within 2 weeks (if the medication is the right one).
- You should be able to take a break from the medication (on the particular area of skin) for at least 1-2 days
- The eczema can leave behind white or dark spots after it is treated. This is not harmful and will fade with time. This is not a side-effect of the medication.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

1. The Eczema Center
<http://www.eczemacenter.org/>
2. The Eczema Society of Canada
<http://www.eczemahelp.ca/>
3. Dr. Lam's e-mail address
joseph.lam@ubc.ca

JOSEPH M LAM, MD FRCP(C)
1803-805 WEST BROADWAY AVE
VANCOUVER, BC V5Z 1K1
604-876-4433 (O)

ECZEMA

“THE ITCH THAT RASHES”



ECZEMA CARE PLAN

1. Bathing/Showering

- Limit to 5-10 minutes
- Avoid hot water baths
- Moisturize right away

2. Shampoo

- Shampoo at the end of bathtime (so your child will not be sitting in shampoo water)

3. Prescription medications

- Apply to any area of the skin that is red, scaly and itchy.
- Use until the skin is smooth (ideally 2 weeks or less)

1/2.5% hydrocortisone ointment/cream

0.01% Dermasmoothe oil

Desonide 0.05% ointment

Verdeso foam

0.1% betamethasone valerate ointment/cream

0.1/0.5% triamcinolone ointment/cream

0.1% mometasone (Elocom) ointment/cream

0.05% clobetasol ointment/cream

1% pimecrolimus (Elidel) cream

0.03/0.1% tacrolimus (Protopic) ointment

4. Moisturizer

- Apply thickly to dry skin many times during the day.
- Do not apply at the same time (or just before) putting on the medication (this will dilute the medication)

5. Other (if recommended)

- *Bleach baths* ("swimming pool baths")

Add 1/4 to 1/2 cup of regular clothing bleach to 1 regular tub of bathwater. Soak for 5-10 minutes. Rinse off. Do this M/W/F.

- *Antihistamine*

Hydroxyzine (Atarax)

Diphenhydramine (Benadryl)

- *Antibiotic*

Cephalexin (Keflex)



Quick facts about eczema

WHAT IS ECZEMA?

Atopic dermatitis (also called eczema) is a condition where the skin is dry, red and itchy. The main function of the skin is to provide protection (keeping water in and irritants out). In eczema, that protection is not working well. The skin gets dry and easily irritated. As a result, when patients with eczema get a flare, the skin gets red, scaly and itchy.

WHY DO PEOPLE GET ECZEMA?

A big part of eczema's cause is due to genetics. In particular, the genes that control how the skin is put together can be altered in children with eczema. However, there are also factors in the environment which can trigger flares of eczema. Scratching, drool, irritating soaps, dust mites, and pet dander are some of the more common triggers. Food can sometimes be a trigger, but is often not a factor in most children with eczema. There is no blood test to diagnose eczema. Fortunately, most children outgrow eczema. However, some will continue to have sensitive skin into adulthood.

WHAT IS THE BIG DEAL WITH ECZEMA?

Eczema is incredibly itchy and scratching the skin can make things worse. Some children have problems sleeping because of the itch. Others scratch to the point of bleeding. Sometimes the skin can also get infected.

HOW DO YOU 'FIX' ECZEMA?

The main goal in treating eczema is to prevent flares and to stop the skin from itching. Since the root of the problem is the skin barrier, a very important part of treatment is to constantly moisturize the skin. In general, the thicker the moisturizer, the better. Ointments are better than creams and creams are better than lotions.

However, if the moisturizer is too sticky, it may be a problem getting it on the child! Once the skin gets irritated, the moisturizers are not enough to get things under control. This is where the prescription medication come to play. Think of these like water to put out the fire of eczema. There are weak, medium and strong medicines. The key is to find one that will put the eczema out completely (within 2 weeks or less). Once the eczema is gone, you can stop the medications, until the next flare. While you are using these medications, continue to moisturize the skin. If you use these medications properly, they are very safe. Other additional ways to treat the skin include special antiseptic baths (called bleach baths), avoiding triggers like fragrances in detergents, creams and soaps, and special bandages called "wet wraps".

WHAT ARE SOME USEFUL MOISTURIZERS?

Very thick: Vaseline, Aquaphor, SpectroEczema, Neutrogena Norwegian formula hand cream

Moderately thick: Eucerin, Cetaphil cream, Aveeno cream, CeraVe, Lipikar baume, Aveeno cream, Curel, Glaxal base, Glysoled, Lubriderm cream

WHICH SOAPS ARE THE BEST?

In general, unless your child is oily or greasy, water alone can be used to clean the skin. However, if soap is needed, some gentler soaps and cleansers include Cetaphil, Lipikar syndet, Dove and Basis.

For the scalp, Johnson's baby shampoo works well. If there is a lot of flaking, you can try T/ Gel shampoo.