

Eczema

Eczema is a chronic skin eruption that has numerous causes. The most common type, called **Atopic Dermatitis/Eczema**, is related to an increased sensitivity of the skin, which usually results in itching and scratching. This type is usually seen in patients with a personal or family history of hay fever, asthma, eczema, hives or penicillin allergy. Another type is **Xerotic Dermatitis/Nummular Eczema (“Winter Itch”)** this usually occurs in the dry winter months.

You should do the following:

- **Avoid Wool and Synthetic** fabrics. Wear loose, cotton type clothing as much as possible. **Avoid** fabrics that feel rough.
- **Avoid Overheating.** Keep as cool as possible. Use luke warm water in the shower or bath. **Avoid hot or cold water. Reduce bathing time to 5-10 minutes.**
- **Soap** – You should use very little soap. We recommend: **Aquanil Cleansing Lotion, Cerave Hydrating Cleanser, Cetaphil Liquid Cleanser, or Dove Unscented/Sensitive Skin Soap.**
- Use a moisturizer right after the shower and then one other during the day. We recommend: **DML lotion, Cerave Moisturizing Cream, Cetaphil Fragrance Free Cream, Vaseline Petroleum Jelly, or Aquaphor Ointment.**
- **For “Winter Itch” or Nummular Eczema – you may try Amlactin XL to the body only (not the face) two times daily. This product is over the counter.**
- **Dust** – Areas such as blinds, bookshelves, carpeting, and bedding accumulate a lot of dust. The patient’s living quarters should be vacuumed often and preferable when the patient is out of the house. Carpets, blankets, and drapes, should be of non-wool fabric and vacuumed regularly to remove dust mites. Using a plastic mattress cover helps reduce house mite populations. Furnace filters should also be kept clean.
- **Humidity should be kept above 40 % whenever possible.**
- **Avoid** cigarette smoke and pet dander.
- **Stress** – Emotional stress is very commonly associated with flares of eczema. Attempts to reduce stress should be made whenever possible.
- Use unscented laundry detergents (**Tide or All color free and fragrance free detergents**), no bleach, no bounce, and no fabric softeners. Also double rinse clothes after washing.
- **A void** use of colognes, perfumes, sprays, or powders on the skin.
- **Avoid** saunas, bubble baths, and steam bathes.

CORTISONE CONTAINING PRODUCTS:

TO THE BODY AREA:

APPLY _____ twice daily as directed. Use it sparingly and rub gently, not vigorously, into the skin. Taper off in 1-2 weeks, as you improve. Avoid eyes, face, and body folds.

TO THE FACE AND/OR BODY FOLDS (This will be a milder cortisone product):

Apply _____ twice daily or as directed. Taper off in one week as you improve. Avoid eyes.

HARMFUL EFFECTS OF TOPICAL CORTISONE:

Improper use of topical cortisone can create both harmful effects on the skin and harmful effects from absorption into the body (causing an imbalance in the body's natural cortisone level). Some harmful effects are:

- stretch marks
- skin thinning
- easy bruising
- prominent small blood vessels
- acne like rashes
- loss of pigment
- facial hair
- increased pressure (glaucoma) and/or cataracts of the eyes.

Thin skin, like the face, groin, and underarm, is most susceptible. Improper use of the more powerful cortisones will allow the cortisone to be absorbed internally, cause an imbalance in the body's natural cortisone level.

NON-CORTISONE PRODUCTS:

- Apply ***Protopic Ointment** twice daily to all affected areas. **Avoid the sun.**
- Apply ***Elidel Cream** twice daily to all affected areas. **Avoid the sun.**
- Apply **Atopiclair** twice daily to all affected areas. **Avoid if you have a nut/peanut allergy.**
- Apply **Mimyx Cream** twice daily to all affected areas.
- Apply **Eletone Cream** twice daily to all affected areas.
- Apply **Epiceram** twice daily to all affected areas.

As your eczema or rash improves, decrease use of **cortisone** products and/or **Elidel/Protopic** and try to use **Atopiclair, Mimyx, Eletone Cream, or Epiceram**. As you improve further, eliminate the Atopiclair, Mimyx, Eletone, or Epiceram and just lubricate your skin instead.

*** Protopic ointment and Elidel Cream have Black Box Warnings placed on them by the FDA. They report plausible cause of skin cancer, lymphoma, and other cancers.**

ANTIHISTAMINES:

If you are given an **antihistamine** to take orally, be sure to take it regularly as directed...usually at night. Some examples: Claritin (Loratidine), Benadryl, Zyrtec (Cetirizine), Allegra (Fexofenadine), Clarinex, Xyzal, and Atarax (Hydroxyzine). Many of these medications are slightly sedating and cause drowsiness.

TRY TO AVOID RUBBING AND SCRATCHING AS THIS JUST MAKES ECZEMA WORSE!!!!!!!

The information provided in this handout is an educational summary and does not cover all possible actions, precautions, side effects, or risk. Contact your physician for any questions.